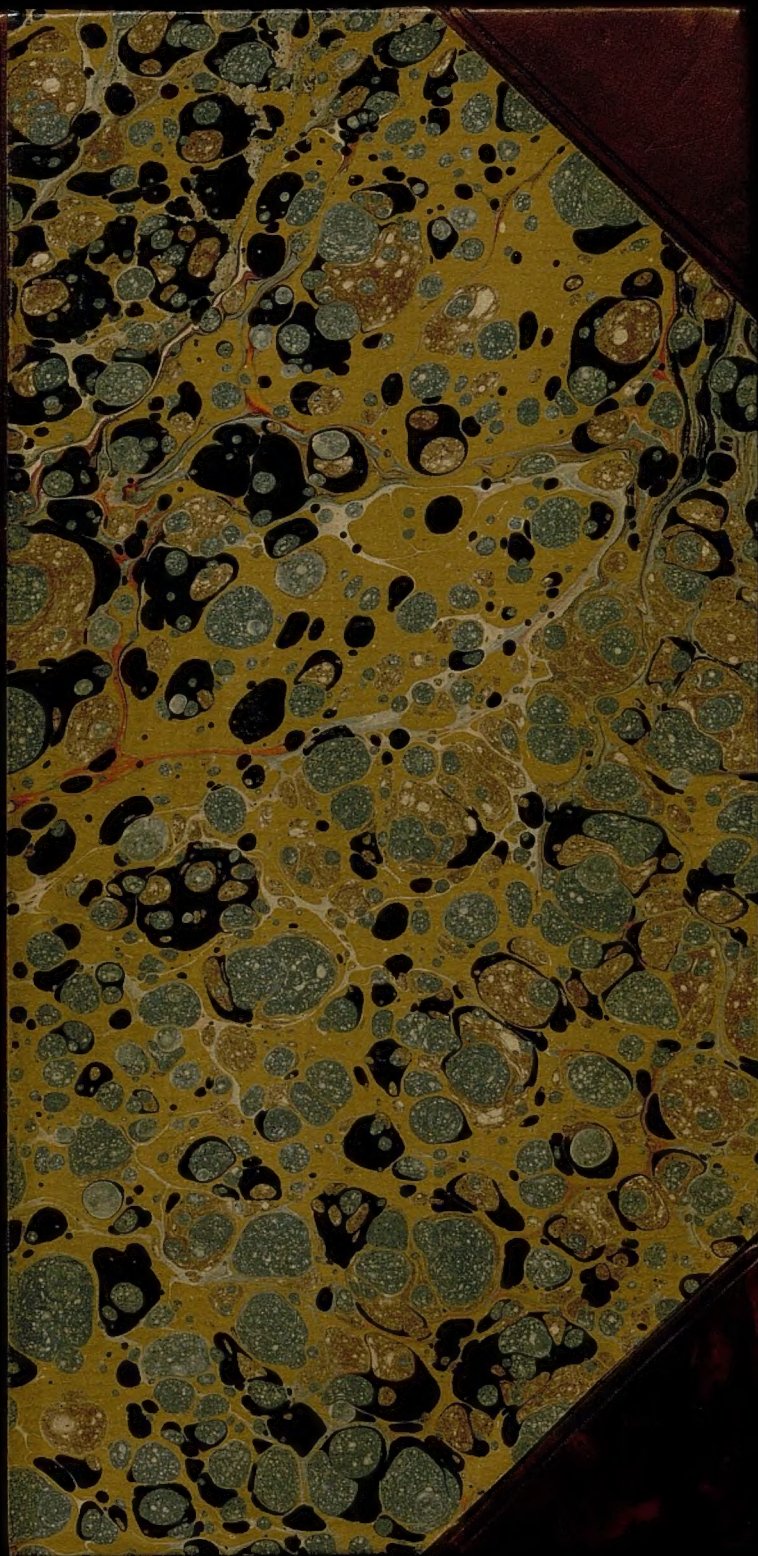
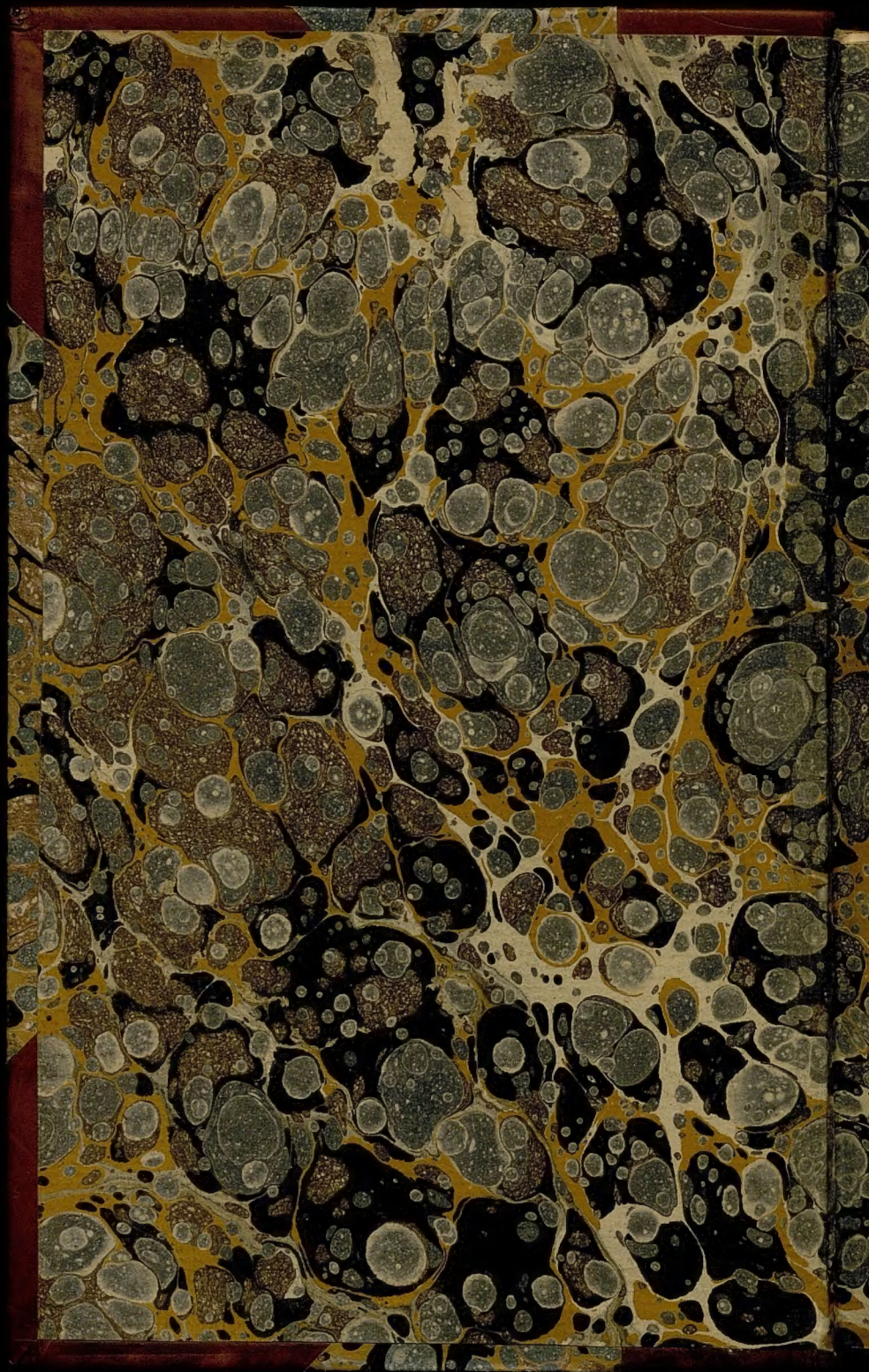


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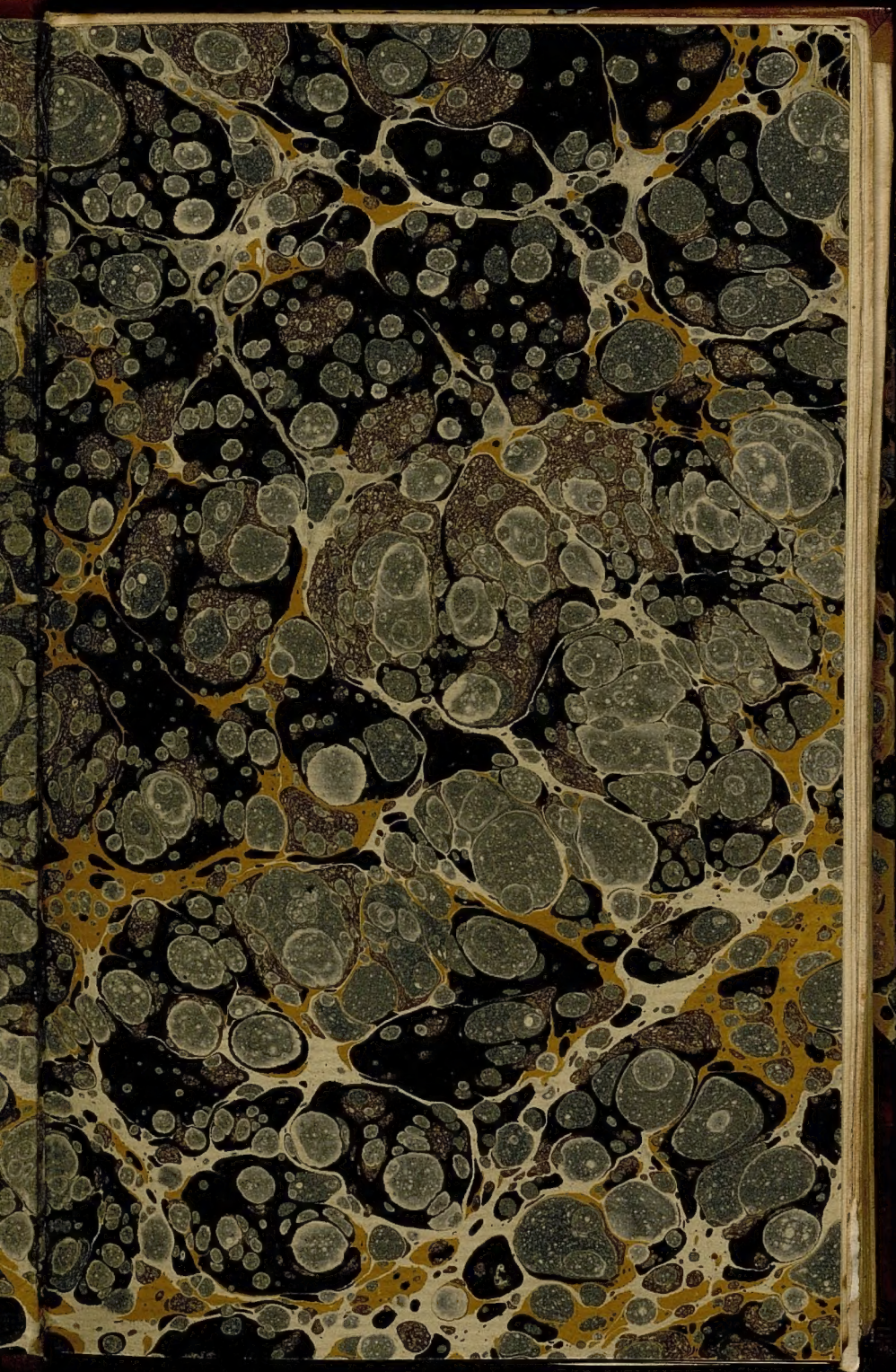
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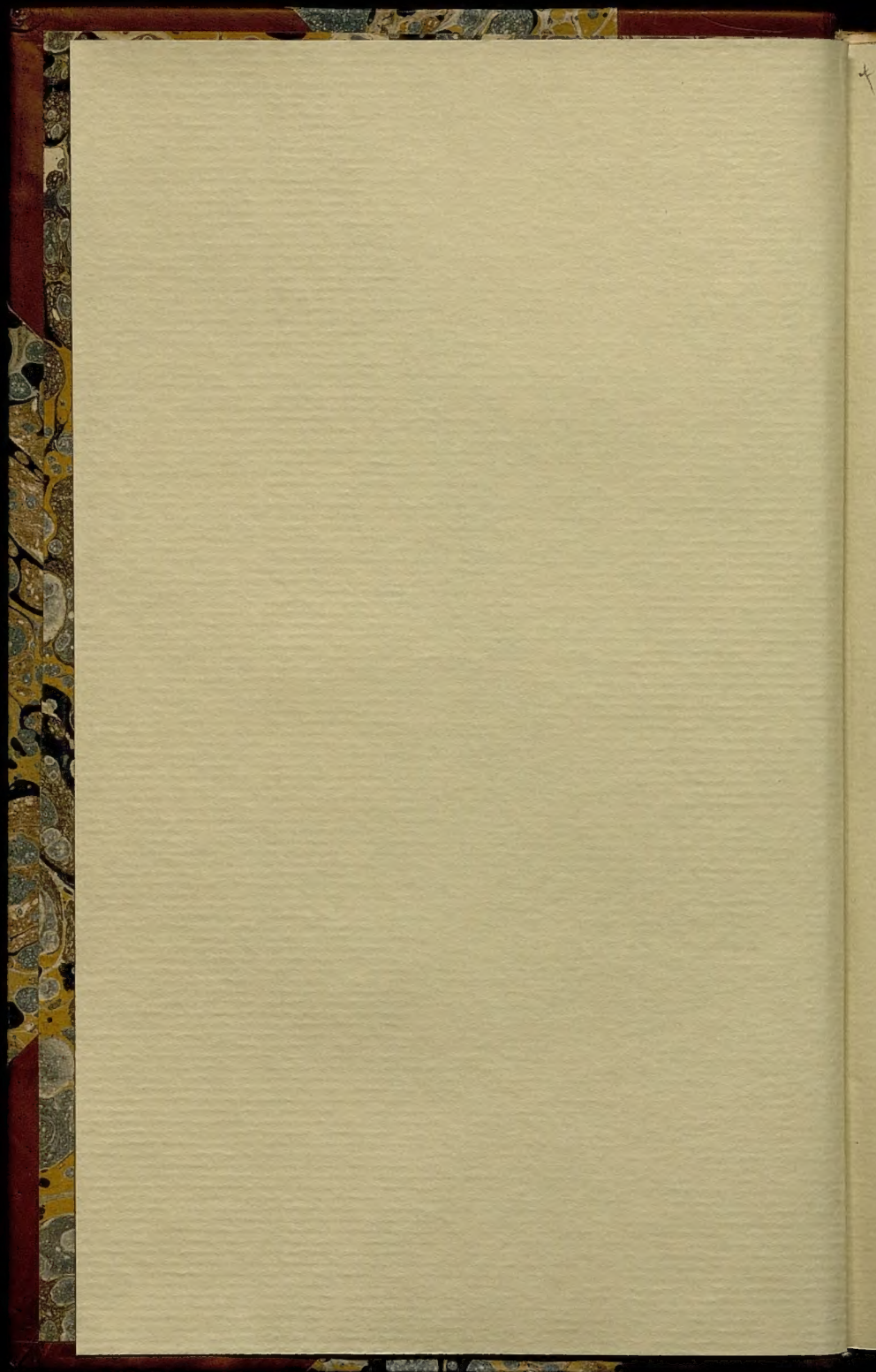




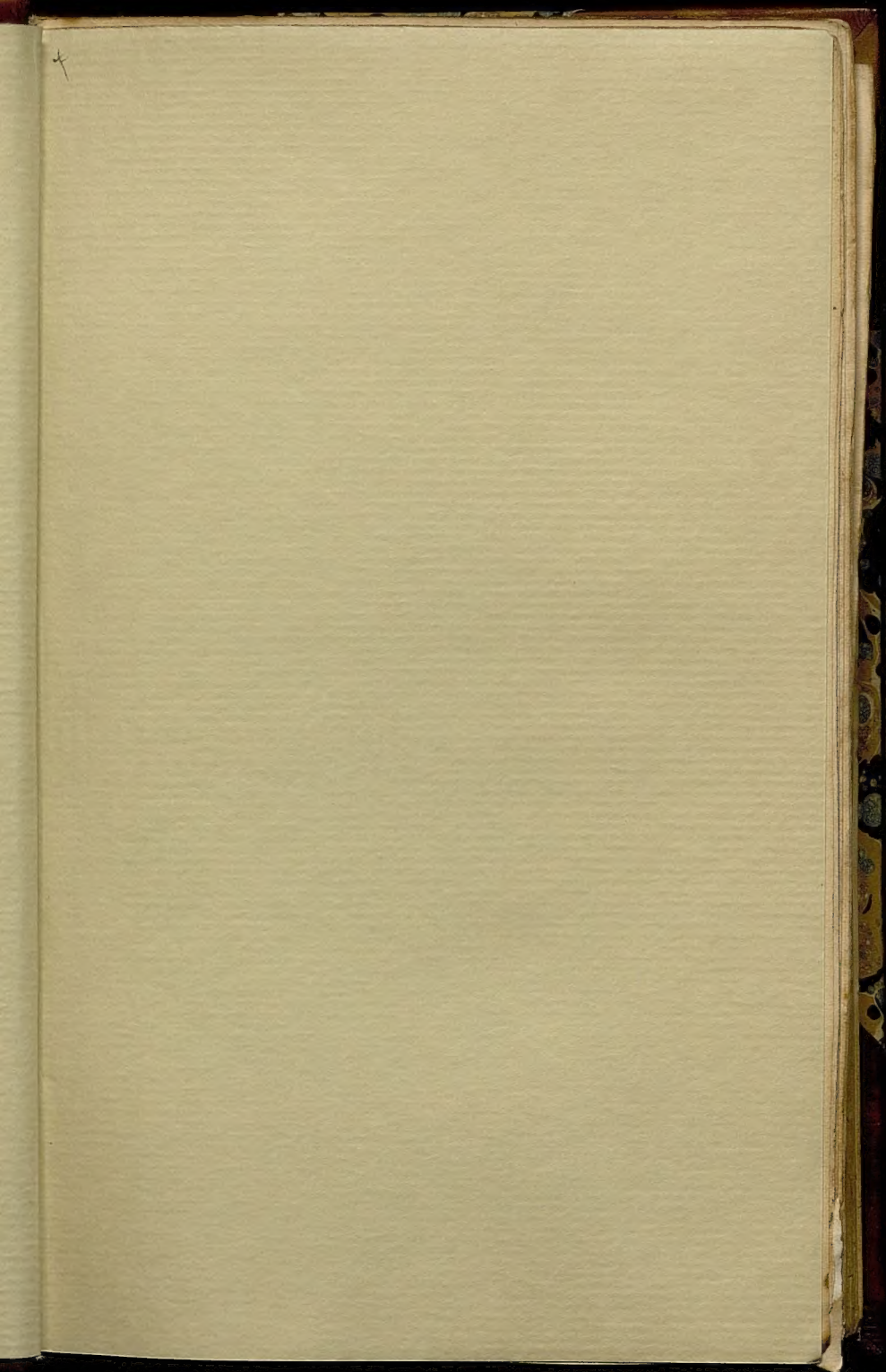




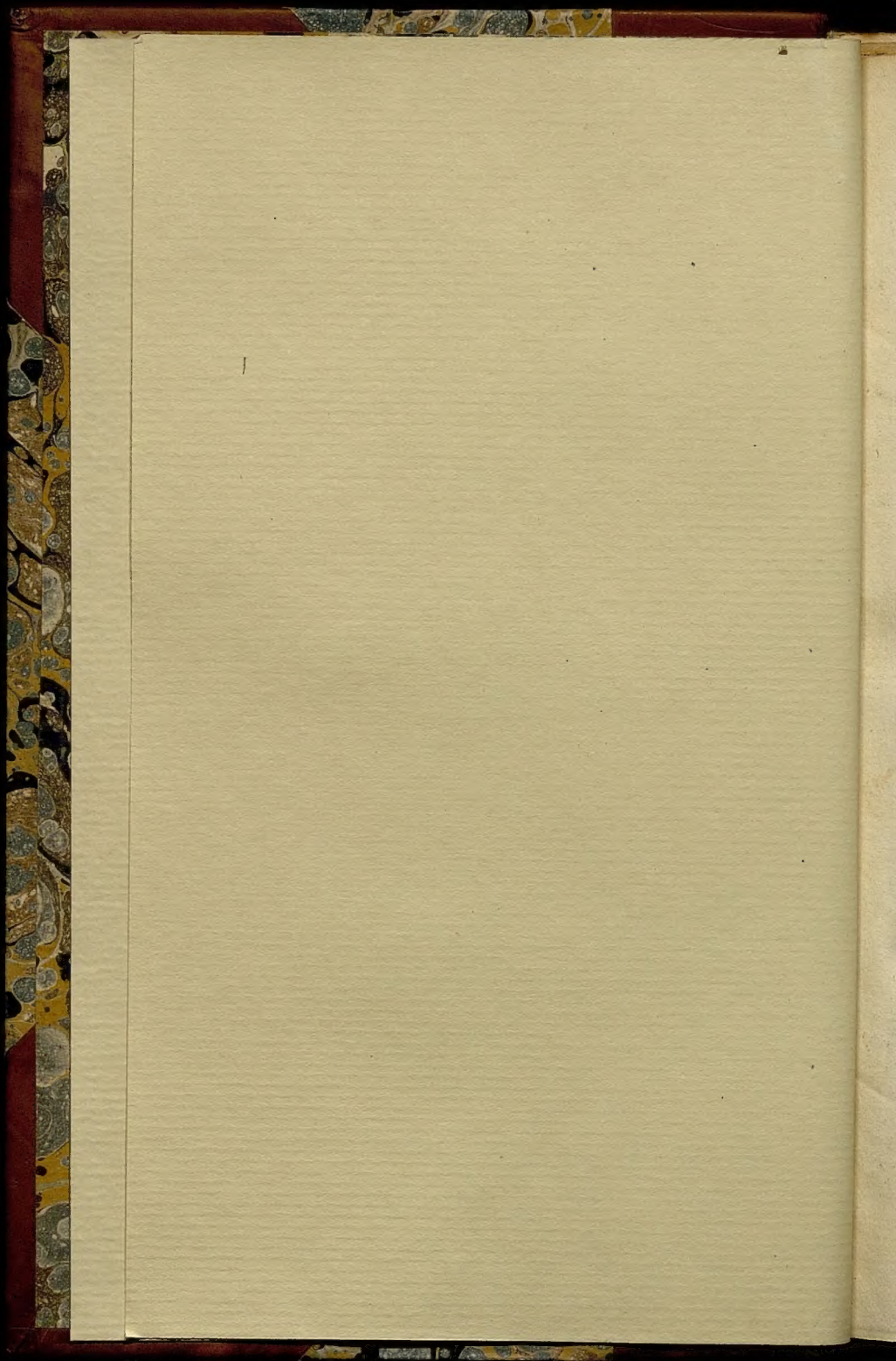






















TRAVELS

IN

KAMTCHATKA AND SIBERIA;

WITH A NARRATIVE OF

A RESIDENCE IN CHINA.

BY

PETER DOBELL,

COUNSELLOR OF THE COURT OF HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY  
THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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## TRAVELS IN KAMTCHATKA, &c.

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### CHAPTER XIV.

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THERE being no hotels in any of the towns of Siberia, I had procured a letter of recommendation to a respectable merchant in Yakutsk, named Alexis Andravitch Zakharof,



who immediately offered me apartments in his house, and received me in the kindest manner.

Shortly after my arrival, I paid a visit to his excellency the governor, Ivan Gregorievitch Khartachefskoy, from whom I experienced the greatest politeness and attention. He invited me to dine with him on Sunday, the following day, and proffered me every possible assistance for the prosecution of my journey to Irkutsk, for which place I intended to set out as soon as I should be able to get a boat prepared, and should be recovered from my fatigue. I found my host not only an extremely hospitable, good man, but obliging and serviceable in every respect. He promised to procure a boat, and prepare it as early as possible, as I was too late to take my passage in the soodna, or large vessel, of thirty or forty tons burthen, that left Yakutsk the day after my arrival.

The town of Yakutsk was composed of two hundred and seventy houses,\* one hundred jurtas, five churches, and a monastery, independently of the government public buildings, magazines, storehouses, outhouses of various de-

\* Both houses and inhabitants are much increased since my first visit, and the town much improved in every way.



scriptions belonging to individuals, &c. One of the churches is quite new, and handsomely built of brick; and there is, also, a new house of the same materials; but all the rest of the buildings are of wood. They are extremely neat and well built; some of them with a great deal of taste, and attention to the architecture. The place has two thousand five hundred Russian inhabitants, including Cossacks, and a very considerable population of Yakuts, in and about the town.

Though the average heat of summer at this place does not exceed 16 degrees of Reaumur, yet is it sometimes as hot as the climates of the torrid zone; and in winter it is the coldest spot in all Siberia, the frost often exceeding 40° of Reaumur. It is situated in 62° 1' 50" N. latitude, and longitude, from St. Petersburg, 99° 24' 15" East.

The principal vegetables cultivated in their gardens are potatoes, cabbages, turnips, radishes, and other roots; cucumbers rarely, except in hot beds, the climate being too capricious to expose them in the open air. Winter sometimes pays them a visit in summer, and frost and snow have been frequently seen in August.

Innumerable herds of cattle and horses are



reared by the Yakuts in the neighbourhood of the town, whilst the river Lena supplies it with fine fish, (such as before described in crossing the Aldan,) as well as a profusion of water fowl, and, in the country around, an abundance of game. We saw pigs and poultry in the street; and my host, Mr. Zakharof, informed me there were some sheep belonging to the inhabitants of the place. The sight of pigs was a treat to my Chinese, who, like the rest of their countrymen, were great pork-eaters, and had a contemptible opinion of every country that was not well stocked with that provision.

Formerly, before the fur trade to the Northwest coast of America was monopolized by the Russian American Company, there was a very spirited and enterprising commerce carried on by individuals through this place. Every spring, fleets of barkas\* of the largest size descended the river, and innumerable convoys of horses departed from thence to Ochotsk, and returned in the fall; so that for the greater part of the summer the town resembled a fair.

\* A barka is a large square raft of very stout timber, hewed flat on the upper side, and floored, on which flour, and all sorts of things, are stowed in bulk, and floated down the Lena to Yakutsk.



The weather suddenly changed on the 15th to cold, with a high wind, and occasional showers of rain; and on the 16th it snowed, and was so very cold, I was obliged to put on my winter garments. Yakutsk is remarkable for these sudden changes from hot to cold, and from cold to hot, the climate being so capricious and uncertain, that the inhabitants can form no previous judgment of it whatever. Their early horticultural labours are sometimes entirely destroyed, and they are obliged to renew them so late that the vegetables cannot arrive at maturity ere hoary winter again spreads his fleecy wings, and forces them to gather their half-ripe products in order to preserve them from his frigid grasp. My host had fine comfortable outhouses for his cattle and horses, cellars for preserving his vegetables, caves for ice, &c. In the latter, fish and meat may be kept good the whole year round in a frozen state; and they always have a large stock.

The following day I visited the ancient citadel; built entirely of wood, one hundred and seventy years previously: also, a brick church, and a council house adjoining, erected by the well-known Stolnick, Voyavauda Sheeskin, the chief and his son, assisted by five hundred Cos-



sacks under his command. The old wooden walls, surmounted by fourteen towers, seven of which now remain, have been so substantially put together, that they are at this moment in a good state of repair, having suffered very little decay; and they exhibit, moreover, much better workmanship than the generality of modern wooden buildings of this description. The citadel is of considerable extent, surrounding a large space where the ostrog formerly stood. Outside of all was a strong picquet fence, and three or four redoubts, proving altogether a very good defence against the Yakuts, Tongu-sees, &c. On the whole, it is one of the handsomest and strongest wooden fortifications I have ever seen, exhibiting an ample proof of the courage, perseverance, and intelligence of the conquerors of Siberia, who, with a handful of men, could erect such a citadel, in the heart of an enemy's country, and during the daily attacks of that enemy.

On the 20th of August, I found my host very early preparing some horses to carry goods, and dealing out to the Yakuts their saddles, mats, &c. I had the curiosity to inquire where those articles were manufactured. He told me the wooden saddles were made by the Russian inha-



bitants; the straw mats, and the girths, bandages, bridles, reins, &c. principally of horse-hair, by the Yakuts; but the cow-hair cloths, placed next the horses' skin, were the manufacture of the Burettas, a populous horde, living near Irkutsk, and called by the Russians *brats*. The saddle, being put together with thongs, and having no iron work whatever about it, is extremely light; but the mat and hair-cloth are large and heavy, and, when once soaked with rain, are themselves almost as much as a beast can carry. I pointed out to my host, that in a country where horse-hair was so abundant, a cushion, stuffed with it, just large enough for the saddle to rest on, with a thin coarse mat or cloth of the lightest description, to keep the load from chafing the horse, would enable the poor beast to carry his burthen with much more ease in every respect. A number of horses on the Yakutsk road are lost, in consequence of non-attention to this circumstance. A horse severely galled frets and becomes feverish, loses his appetite, and grows weaker from day to day, till at length, worn down by his burthen, he breathes out his last by the road-side. If there are no spare horses (which often happens), what he had carried must be distributed amongst the



rest, who are consequently overloaded, and the whole convoy suffers through a single accident — oftentimes many of them dying — and all this for want of a little attention to prevent them from being galled ! The number of dead horses I saw by the road-side on my journey from Ochotsk has induced me to notice this circumstance particularly.\* To lose so many horses is a matter of great regret, and it is a most painful sight to see animals of such a noble and useful description galled and ill-used.†

\* There is, however, a disease that prevails occasionally on the Ochotsk road, and carries off an immense number of horses. In the spring of 1818 we left Yakutsk with a convoy of seventy horses; and we had only twenty-two left on arriving at Udomskoy Krest. They were attacked by a swelling of the glands of the throat, or by lumps arising on the breast or belly; and I never saw a horse live more than three days after he was thus attacked.

† No Yakut should be allowed to receive the Government flour or liquor without his packsaddle being prepared in such a way as to prevent his horses from injury during their journey. In other respects, the Yakuts are most tender and kind to their animals, and seldom beat them; and the attachment of a herd of horses for their keepers is so strong, they will not proceed without them, should they stop and leave them. They are turned out to feed every night, and always collected in the morning, by hallooing to them. Should any of them get out of



In the evening the Governor waited on me, and invited me to accompany him to a house, to see a ceremony performed, previously to a wedding that was to take place the next day. We repaired to the house, where we found a large party of gentlemen and ladies assembled. The bride and her attendants occupied one end of the room, near a large table, on which were placed fruits, cakes, wines, &c. Tea and coffee were then served. Afterwards, I was called to look at a procession from an opposite building or store, called in this country an *anbar*, where every sort of provisions, effects, &c. are kept. I saw several low, four-wheeled vehicles, each drawn by a single ox, loaded with furniture, bedding, clothing, &c. &c. for the new married couple. Lights were carried before them, and a number of young girls, assembled near the door of the *anbar*, sang in concert, as each vehicle was loaded with the effects of the bride. This ended, the party returned to the house, when dancing commenced, and was kept up

hearing, the Yakut jumps on one of the others, who is sure to find his companion in a very short time. When the Yakut calls, the first horse that hears answers by neighing, and immediately the whole herd begin to neigh, and run to the keeper.



### Г Л А В А III.

ЧТО ПРОИЗОШЛО ПОСЛѢ ССОРЫ ИВАНА ИВАНОВИЧА СЪ ИВАНОМЪ НИКИФОРОВИЧЕМЪ?

Итакъ, два почтенные мужа, честь и украшеніе Миргорода, поссорились между собою! и за что? за вздоръ, за гусака! не захотѣли видѣть другъ друга, прервали всѣ связи, между-тѣмъ-какъ прежде были извѣстны за самыхъ неразлучныхъ друзей. Каждый день, бывало, Иванъ Ивановичъ и Иванъ Никифоровичъ посылаютъ другъ къ другу узнать о здоровьи и ча-



opposite side of the table, holding the image of the Virgin in his hand, and crossed himself on his knees, and bowed his head three times to the ground, before his father, who, when he rose, took the image from him, kissed him, and crossed him with it on his head. The same homage was paid to his mother, on which she delivered the image to another person, who preceded the bridegroom and his party to the church, where they met the bride and her attendants; and the couple were then led to the altar, and united in the holy bands of wedlock, by the Protopope, or Chief of the Clergy. The ceremony resembles that of the Catholic church, except that, towards the close, the priest places a hymeneal crown on the heads of the man and woman, and they walk three times round a table, where lie the cross and the Bible. This part of the proceeding is regarded as alternately binding them in strict allegiance to each other during the rest of their lives. There are also two rings used, which are exchanged, from the man to the woman, during the ceremony. The whole party now returned to the house of the bridegroom's father, where a repast was prepared for them, resembling all large entertainments of this sort. The healths of the principal persons of the place



were drunk, and followed by a salute of three guns after each toast. The evening was crowned with an illumination, and a ball, at which, as a stranger, I had the honour of leading off the bride.

I found the inhabitants of Yakutsk hospitable, kind, and gay. Several balls were given during my stay, and where there were assembled all the belles of the town, whose dress, manners, and appearance far surpassed what I expected to meet with in so remote a situation. The only fault I found with the ladies was, their being too much ornamented. Indeed, it is greatly to be lamented, that women, in every country, both high and low, civilized and savage, use too many ornaments. One of our best poets has said, beauty

— “is, when unadorned, adorned the most.”

and, I may add with safety, ugliness unadorned is infinitely less ugly. Thus much I have ventured to say in favour of dame Nature; let the ladies look to it. They will find their account in the modest, simple attire, that renders defects less noticed, and every charm more charming.

On the day I had fixed for my departure, I waited on the Governor to take my leave of



him, who, with his accustomed politeness and hospitality, endeavoured to detain me to dinner; but I was obliged to resist his kindness, and to depart. I also took an affectionate farewell of my good host and his family, from whom I had received every possible attention. He accompanied me to my boat, taking with him a sheep, a large fish, and other provisions, which he insisted on my accepting for my journey. The Governor, I found, without saying any thing to me, had sent a supply of fine bread, poultry, &c. so that I was overpowered with every sort of good thing by these hospitable people. Indeed the inhabitants of Siberia, in this respect, bear away the palm from all the rest of the globe.

As Yakutsk is the spot where the Yakuts, who are supposed to have migrated from some other part of Siberia, first made a settlement, I take this opportunity of giving to the readers what I have been able to collect on the subject of this horde, whose Tartar origin, according to my eyes, seems indisputably stamped in their features. There are credible proofs to adduce of their being descended from the Mongols, but their most probable origin is Tartar. On application to the chiefs of the horde, very little



light has been thrown on this subject, as they have no books, or written documents of any sort, and what has been derived from oral tradition is too imperfect and unconnected to afford any very satisfactory information. Their manners and customs resemble those of the Burrettas: and indeed those of the Siberian tribes generally are very similar. The following facts however serve to establish the opinion of their having been descended from a race of Tartars living on the frontiers of the Government of Tobolsk, who call themselves Sagay, and who occupy a portion of the Barabinsky Step; \* or also from a tribe of Tartars of the same description living about Krasnoyarsk.

A Yakut's features and the expression of his countenance partake much more of the Tartar than of the Mongol race. His language also bears a strong affinity to that of the Tartars of Baraba, and he calls himself Saga, a name differing so little from Sagay, the name of the Barabinsky horde, that there is every reason to believe him descended from that people,

\* Step means an arid plain; and is therefore a term very inapplicable to the plain of Baraba, which has a fine river, and is very fertile, and in many parts covered with trees of a large growth.



although dissimilar to them in some other respects, perhaps owing to a long separation, and the having intermixed with other tribes. As to the number of words of Mongol, Buretta, and Tongusee, found in their language, it proves nothing more than that they have either lived in the neighbourhood of, or intermixed with, those nations. I found no one who could give me the etymology of the appellation Yakut. It does not exist in the Yakut language and has probably been bestowed upon them on some particular occasion by the Russians or others. Another remarkable fact is, that Saga was the original name of the river of the step of Baraba, which has been changed since the country has become more thickly inhabited. According to their chronicles, as handed down by oral tradition, they are descended from two tribes. One of these was named Batulen, whose chief was called Omogoy Bey, and who with his family quitted his country for reasons unknown, but was probably driven away by force of arms and the oppressions and vexations of some more powerful horde. The number of his tribe that emigrated to the country of the Burettas, in the vicinity of Irkutsk, on the banks of the Lena, is also unknown. On descending that river they stopped for some



time at the mouth of the river Olekma, and then continued their journey until they arrived at the spot where the town of Yakutsk now stands, and there made a permanent settlement. They relate, that whilst in the country of the Burettas, and proceeding towards the Lena, they were several times attacked by that horde, who at length collecting all their forces, determined to exterminate Omogoy Bey and his party. A superstition prevailing even to this hour amongst the Burettas, that of never undertaking any thing of importance between the full and new moon, saved the Yakuts from destruction. Whilst their enemies were awaiting the propitious moment to attack them, they crossed the mountains to the banks of the Lena, where, constructing rafts, they embarked with their cattle and horses, and were soon conveyed by that rapid stream far from the danger that had threatened them. The place where they descended the steep bank of the river to embark still bears the name of the Yakutskoy Svoz,\* or place of embarkation of the Yakuts.

Their second tribe, they say, is descended from a tribe whose chief is named Ellija, pro-

\* The Russian word *svoz* properly means the place of transport, or the transport itself.



bably the same Tartar horde from whence sprung the ancestors of the Batulen race, who also descended the Lena, but from what direction is likewise unknown. It appears that Ellija had been informed of the departure of Omogoy Bey; and, although the navigation of the Lena was quite unknown to him, neither its dangers nor the extreme severity of the climate could deter him from executing his design. He arrived at Yakutsk, and finding there Omogoy Bey and his party, immediately joined them. Omogoy Bey became much attached to Ellija, and gave him his daughter in marriage, which indissolubly united the two tribes.

From documents preserved in the archives of Ineseisk it would appear, that a *desatrik* (a sort of civil under-officer) named Ilia Ermolin, belonging to a party led by one Golkin to the banks of the Lena (where they expected to find some Cossacks, that is to say, at the mouth of the river Kiringee), heard from the Tongusees that the Cossacks whom they sought had gone to the land of the Yakuts. It seems then, that the Tongusees, and perhaps the Burettas, had given them the name of the Yakuts.

Those indefatigable Cossacks were the persons who at length conquered the inhabitants;



and there actually remains at the town of Yakutsk the greater part of a very strong wooden fortification built by them, which, if it had been taken common care of, would now be almost as strong as the day it was built. It has, however, been suffered to fall into decay.

The province of Yakutsk, although considered the coldest part of Siberia, possesses a number of important natural advantages, of which, however, many must remain useless until the country becomes peopled, and the inland communications are brought to perfection. Iron, salt, and several other minerals have been discovered there. On the banks of the Vitime talc of a very fine quality, and very transparent, is every season procured in considerable quantities. All through the eastern parts of Siberia it is used instead of window-glass, and is an excellent substitute, being almost as transparent as glass, and much less liable to be broken. In Kamtchatka the natives use the dried guts of bears and seals; I mean those who live in the remotest parts, or are too poor to buy talc.

The river Lena, and all its tributary streams, are remarkable for the fine flavour and abundance of their fine fish; and the lakes, which, as I have remarked are exceedingly numerous, are



filled with excellent carp, tench, &c. &c. When I was last at Yakutsk, in 1827, sterilits, white fish, &c. were selling for six to seven roubles the pood,—say six to seven shillings sterling for thirty-six English pounds; and beef was at two to two and a half rubles the pood. The province abounds equally in game: geese, ducks, partridges, black game, gelinottes,\* &c. are to be had extremely cheap.

The sables of Yakutsk are also highly esteemed; but the furs are inferior to those of Kamtchatka, except those caught about the shores of the frozen ocean. The musk-deer, the elk, and the rein-deer, are very numerous, particularly the latter, which are killed sometimes to the number of a thousand at a time by those who watch their paths, and attack them whilst they are crossing the rivers.

In this province the bones of the mammoth, and an amphibious animal of a large size, called

\* This is the finest flavoured game I ever tasted, and particularly those killed in the parts of Siberia where the nut-bearing pine abounds, as they feed upon the nuts. It is a bird nearly as large as a partridge, and evidently of the same species; but its habits are different. It perches upon the trees, and is particularly fond of the water-willow and the pine. I give it the French name: the English one is, I believe, wood-hen.



by the Yakuts the bull of the lakes, have been found in large quantities. The jaw-teeth of the bull of the lakes weighs generally from ten to twenty pounds Russian. A gentleman at Yakutsk assured me, that about twenty years back he saw one of these animals, which the Yakuts had found dead on the borders of a very large lake. He described it as resembling the buffalo. It was of a dun colour, the hair very soft and short, but the skin thick, the horns extremely long, wide apart, and almost straight; and, although the Yakuts said it was a young one, it weighed between forty and fifty poods.\* They are now considered as extinct. I saw two immense claws at Yakutsk, one of which was upwards of an archin in length, supposed to have belonged to a gigantic species of bird of prey; but to me they had more the appearance of having belonged to some large sea-animal: for what must have been the stature of a bird, whose claws were more than an archin in length?

One would imagine that the climate of that part of the country bordering on an ocean constantly covered with ice, should be excessively cold. It is however quite the contrary; for the winters

\* A pood is thirty-six pounds English.



are much milder than at Yakutsk, which is so far from the sea. I have been told by those who have inhabited that portion of the country, that the severe frost never lasts more than a few days at a time; but at Yakutsk it continues all the months of December and January, from twenty-five to forty degrees. The summers about the frozen ocean are colder and more humid than those inland, and of shorter duration; consequently agriculture can never be introduced there. It has however been lately proved beyond contradiction, that rye, barley, and wheat succeed remarkably well throughout the province of Yakutsk, except those parts which are so far north as to render the summer too short for ripening grain.\*

In the autumn of 1813, the first time I travelled along the banks of the Lena, I found that agriculture had advanced no farther than Olekma, six hundred versts above Yakutsk.

\* Notwithstanding the severity of the winter in this province, it may with truth be called the garden of Flora; nor have I ever seen in any country a greater variety of beautiful wild flowers than are profusely spread over the country about Yakutsk, and the country between it and Ochotsk. I am well convinced there is much novelty to interest the botanist. Along the Lena the wild asters are in great abundance, variety, and beauty.



But, at my return in the spring of 1818, it had already begun to advance, and in the summer of 1827, when I again mounted against the stream of the Lena, in my journey from Manilla and Kamtchatka to St. Petersburg, I found grain cultivated even in the environs of Yakutsk, and on the banks of the river Amga between Yakutsk and Ochotsk! At the latter place there is a settlement of Russian peasants, who till the ground; and they say it is extremely fertile. Barley and spring-rye, called in Russian *yaritsa*, are the two grains which succeed best in those new settlements. The crops along the Lena were at first often destroyed by mildew and hoar frost, because, the country being mountainous, the inhabitants erroneously thought the grain would succeed better in the valleys and low grounds. They have, however, at length discovered their mistake; and the traveller now sees fine fields of grain on the sides of the mountains, where they often prosper, while those below are injured. Even the Yakuts along the Lena, and on the numerous large islands which divide that fine stream, have taken seriously to agriculture; so that, in spite of the little encouragement received from the local Government, the natives having now found



their account in the labours of the field, there is every reason to conclude these will spread over the province.

But a few versts from Yakutsk, I found a very nice little farm well cultivated in wheat, barley, and rye, belonging to a Mr. Porotoff, the son of one of the ancient Boyars of that country. Unfortunately he is a very poor man, with a large family, and has met with no encouragement from his Government; which, however, he is really entitled to, having been one of the first to set an example to the Yakuts; but unfortunately the Governor of Yakutsk acts on the opinion, that agriculture would interfere with his contracts for flour, transportation, &c. and would decrease the number of hunters. However, I feel well persuaded, if his Imperial Majesty knew the real situation of poor Mr. Porotoff and his family, he would not fail to reward him.

The people who are sent to govern the eastern parts of Siberia are generally so fond of sables and foxes that they regret to see any attempts at agriculture and improvement, for fear of being deprived of their favourite furs, which not only serve to line their garments, but also, and that exceedingly well, their pockets.



There must also be a great deal of improper management, to say the least of it, in the purchase of flour, the transportation of it, packing, &c. &c. which I cannot pass over in silence, as it really calls for strict examination. A pood of flour that costs only fifty to sixty kopecs at Irkutsk, and is generally sold at Yakutsk at a rouble to a rouble and a half, stands the Government, by the time it arrives at Ochotsk (one thousand and twelve versts), nearly ten roubles per pood. To carry five poods and thirty pounds of this flour to Ochotsk, contracts are made with the Yakuts at eighty or eighty-five roubles, and sometimes more, per horse; this being a horse's load. Now I have been confidently informed, that the Yakuts seldom receive much more than one half of that sum; the rest being divided amongst the officers of Government! There is also much to be altered in the manner of transporting the flour on the Lena and to Ochotsk. Flour is generally sent down the Lena in large square flat-bottomed vessels called barques, in bulk; and, as it is often badly dried, it heats, becomes bitter, and loses much of its nutritious quality. When it arrives at Yakutsk it is thrown into magazines, also in *bulk*, where it becomes





further heated, and is more or less spoiled.\* If it were sent in bags from Irkutsk it would be much better preserved, and the additional cost would be trifling, as the bags would serve many years in succession. At Yakutsk the flour is packed into leathern bags, called sumas, made of ox-hides untanned, but dressed white, and the hair taken off. To pack the flour into them tightly, so that each suma shall contain two poods and thirty-five pounds, it is necessary to wet them; the flour that adheres to the wet suma dries and becomes as hard as a stone, and is thus rendered impenetrable to all sorts of weather; so that if the suma be good there cannot be a safer mode of conveying the article; but unfortunately the sumas that are now contracted for at about two roubles and a half a-piece, are so thin and bad, that the flour often spoils, and the sumas only serve for a season or two, instead of lasting four or five years, as was formerly the case. It would be cheaper to pay five roubles for a good strong suma, that would last several years, than to buy such trash because it is cheap. However, it would of course

\* As I have been three times at Yakutsk, and lived there once for ten months, the reader will perceive that I speak of those matters from my own experience.



prove less profitable to the parties concerned, if the sumas were good and the contracts fewer. During five years residence in Kamtchatka, I paid from eleven and a half to twelve roubles and sixty kopecs a pood for the rye-flour I consumed; and I never saw a suma that was not either bitter-flavoured, tasting of the leather, or having sand mixed with it. One additional cause, however, of the spoiling of the sumas must be mentioned, because it proceeds from neglect. That there are rats in the magazines at Ochotsk and Kamtchatka arises from their not having been properly built. The floors and ceilings should be either composed of solid square birch logs, laid close together, or else lined with sheet-iron. Either of these methods would effectually keep out the rats; but neither will be adopted at Kamtchatka as long as the Government is in the habit of allowing ninety poods of flour\* annually for the consumption of those animals, many of whom I believe, if the truth were known, have only *two legs*! Their getting into the transports is owing to the neglect of the commanders, who do not take the

\* I have since heard that the Government of Irkutsk has at length refused to allow rations to the rats of Kamtchatka.



necessary precautions to prevent them; or if they get in, surely a good smoking would destroy them in a few hours. If there were not a great deal of improper management and bad conduct, surely the flour might be carried cheaper, and be sold for much less than twelve roubles and sixty kopecs at Kamtchatka.

Whilst I am on this subject, I cannot forbear offering an opinion with respect to the Government transports employed to carry the flour from Ochotsk to Kamtchatka. Having visited three times the eastern parts of Siberia, as well as having lived a long time at Kamtchatka, I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the numerous shipwrecks and other accidents which have occurred on the shores of the peninsula, and in the sea of Ochotsk. Those misfortunes often recurring, and I being somewhat of a seafaring man myself, I was led to search into the cause of such frequent mishaps; and I here give the result of my observations.

In the first place, I found the construction of the transports out of all sort of good proportion: Not that one can say they are badly built; for they are put together as strongly as it is possible for wood and iron to make them; but their models are bad and inconvenient. They re-



semble the large barques used in Russia on the canals and rivers for transporting fire-wood. Flat-bottomed, wall-sided, with square heavy sterns, too short for their breadth, and with scarcely any keel, I think every mariner will agree with me, that vessels so awkwardly built can never prove good sea-boats. The fact is, that they are very bad sailors, extremely difficult to steer, and dangerous on a lee-shore with a strong breeze, because you cannot keep them near enough to the wind to haul off; and if you attempt to beat to windward they make so much lee-way that you would be inevitably thrown ashore. When close hauled to the wind, and going only two and a half to three knots through the water, they will drift one and a half to two knots to leeward; and if the wind and swell increase, they make as much lee-way as head-way. Indeed if the wind blows very hard they make no head-way whatever. I sailed from Kamtchatka to Ochotsk in one of the best of those transports, the *Alexander*, and thence made my remarks from her sailing. She has been since wrecked on the coast of Kamtchatka, near Bolchèresk. It is really unreasonable, to say the least of it, to send those vessels to sea, and expose the lives of men in such craft.



Secondly, the shrouds, cordage, and in fact all the standing and running rigging, as well as the spars, are much too stout and heavy; a circumstance that renders them difficult to manage with the crew that should properly belong to a vessel of only one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty tons burthen. Their hulls are also too stout; the timbers, ribs, beams, and knees, being as heavy as those of a frigate. Indeed the timbers are so thickly set together as to form one solid mass of wood, bound by a quantity of large iron bolts. This method has been adopted to make them as strong as possible, and able to bear being drawn on shore, or to touch upon the sand-banks without injury. It is the custom to run the transports a-shore the moment they arrive, and let them lie there until the time arrives to prepare for receiving the flour for Kamtchatka! The rigging, spars, &c. are all taken on shore, and the vessel remains there secured by hawsers, under the charge of an under-officer and two or three sailors. I am sure no one will attempt to deny but she must be more or less damaged by touching the ground, no matter what may be the strength of her construction: and if the vessels



had such keels as they ought to have, a practice of the kind would be totally inadmissible.

In the third place, the officers, generally speaking, sent from St. Petersburg to command those vessels, are incapable of the duty imposed on them. They are for the most part midshipmen, who have only just come out of the marine corps, and who get the rank of lieutenant for going to Siberia; or young lieutenants, who have perhaps made two or three voyages on the Baltic. It is impossible those young gentlemen should have acquired experience sufficient for the command of a vessel. Although they may understand perfectly the theory of navigation, they cannot, without practical knowledge and experience, know how to save a vessel under critical circumstances. Even coolness and courage, without experience, only serve to embarrass the possessor of those qualities, and render his ignorance more fatal. It should always be remembered, that nautical knowledge and skill *can only be acquired by constant practice and experience*. Inexperience at sea makes sometimes dreadful havoc amongst sails and spars; to say nothing of endangering lives. It appears to me also that giving promotion to those who go to



Siberia, is doing an injury to the officers generally of our navy; for it is only the inexperienced, or those who have a distaste for real active service, that consent to go thither. A rank in the imperial marine should never be conceded but to those who merit it by the term of their service, or who have distinguished themselves by their actions or useful knowledge. It would be much better to choose commanders for the transports from experienced masters of good conduct, who, after having served well a certain number of years, might be rewarded by being made midshipmen, or presented with pensions if they do not wish to serve again.

To convey the flour from Ochotsk to Kamtchatka, the Government should build vessels of about one hundred and eighty to two hundred tons burthen, with sharp keels, and on such a model as will enable them at one and the same time to sail well and carry a large cargo. A vessel of such a construction as this will not only sail well, but will keep a better wind, and in case of necessity, will be able to beat off a lee-shore, and avoid the frequent dangers which occur on the coasts of Kamtchatka and Ochotsk. If she be rigged strongly but lightly, the same number of sailors actually employed will be sufficient to



navigate her. The vessels now employed are not only dangerous and bad sailers, but they are too small and inconvenient; having no place for passengers, and very little room even for the sailors. In going from Ochotsk it often happens that the passengers live in the long-boat on deck, and a portion of the cargo also is exposed upon the decks. But the general practice has been to put the passengers and exiles all together in the hold, on the top of the flour. It is certainly contrary to the custom and rules of navigation to keep the hold open at sea, as it not only endangers the vessel in bad weather, but at all times exposes the cargo to be damaged or plundered. I hardly ever knew a transport arrive at Kamtchatka without our hearing complaints of property being stolen, damaged, or washed overboard by the waves. It has been represented that no vessel drawing more than eight feet water can enter without danger the port of Ochotsk. This however is not true. My vessel, drawing upwards of eleven feet, was lent twice to the Government to carry flour to Kamtchatka, and entered and departed both times without being injured. The vessels belonging to the Russian American Company, which have been bought from foreigners, and which are sharp



built, drawing some of them more than nine feet water, go thither from Sitga every season, and I never heard of their being damaged. However, they are not suffered to touch the ground, being moored to chains which have been anchored purposely in deep water; and the captains, officers, and sailors live on board to take care of them. The fact is, that there are no chains at Ochotsk belonging to the Government; but then they ought to be sent thither, and orders given never to let the transports touch the ground.

Such vessels as those just alluded to would suit remarkably well for transports; being good sailers, well able to carry a large cargo, and not drawing more than nine to ten feet water when loaded. It would certainly be very easy to take their models, and build vessels exactly like them at Ochotsk. They are brigs of about two hundred tons burthen. When the vessels are built on a good model, and larger, they will not only sail better and be safer sea-boats, but they will be able to accommodate the passengers in a suitable manner, and take all the cargo under decks; so that the holds may remain properly secured during the passage.

Every seafaring man will allow also, that a



vessel is never considered completely fitted out without having good anchors and cables. The yarns which I have seen sent in the frigates from St. Petersburg, generally arrive at Ochotsk half rotten, owing to their being too much tarred and not properly packed. Rope-yarns, to be sent to Ochotsk, should be lightly tarred;\* for in passing through the hot climates, if they get damp, they are immediately heated, and then rot. To prevent their getting damp, they ought to be packed first in bales covered with old canvas, and then with tarpaulings. This method will effectually keep out the damp. It is not so much the heat as the moisture that spoils them. Cordage is often spoiled in going to hot climates from the effect of heat and moisture combined; but if the coils were covered close with tarpaulings, the moisture could not enter, and heat could not injure them. I have seen rope-yarns brought overland from Irkutsk, which certainly arrived in very good condition, because they were well packed; but their cost must have been excessively high. Indeed I have always been astonished that Go-

\* It is very easy to add tar to the yarns in Ochotsk when they make them into ropes and cables.



vernment should keep ship-yards and build vessels at Ochotsk, when it would be much better and cheaper to build them at St. Petersburg, and send them thither. This would be not only saving a great deal of money, but it would be giving the officers and sailors an opportunity of acquiring a good deal of valuable practical knowledge in their voyage round the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn. Such a plan would be an advantageous one in many points of view; for, at that immense distance from the seat of Government, many things are done which would not be attempted at Cronstadt or at St. Petersburg.

I make these remarks purposely, in hopes that the Government may profit by them, and be induced to adopt measures to prevent the many abuses which exist in the eastern parts of Siberia, and to ameliorate the situation of its inhabitants. This has been a long digression; but as the flour and other articles despatched to Kamtchatka are for the most part sent from Yakutsk, I have made my observations from that place as the fountain-head. The reader will also allow, that I may be supposed to have good information on the subject, since my last of three visits to that quarter was of ten months duration.

One of the great advantages the province of



Yakutsk possesses, consists in its fine pastures and meadows, which enable the inhabitants to rear a large quantity of cattle and horses. Being at an *ouloos* (Yakut village), where I observed a great many horses and cattle, and but a slender stock of hay in proportion, I questioned my host how he managed to feed them through the winter. He replied, "We only feed with hay our milch cows, our oxen destined for beef, our breeding mares, best horses, and some very young cattle: the rest find their own food by scraping the snow off the grass with their hoofs, and by browsing. As the snow is rarely more than seven or eight inches deep at Yakutsk, the grass is but thinly covered, and the cattle find their food very easily. We keep goats, \* which provide for themselves likewise. If," added he, "the spring is very backward, we then give them a little hay until the new grass begins to sprout."—I cannot, however, admire this mode; for I remarked many Yakuts, who, on account of the facility that nature thus affords, kept an overstock of cattle, the greater part of which were very small and poor.

\* Whoever keeps any considerable number of horses, always keep goats with them to preserve them in good health.



Indeed, all their cattle are very small, as well as their horses; and I ascribe that fact to the want of generous nourishment whilst young. Horses are their peculiar care, because they are profitable for hiring to the government, and to the merchants, for the transport of flour and merchandize; and because, likewise, the favorite beverage of the people, *khoomiss*, is not considered really good unless made of mare's milk. They certainly rob the colts of their due; a circumstance that prevents their growth. Notwithstanding this, they have a good, strong, hardy race of horses; who will live on bushes when there is no grass, and are certainly the most docile and indefatigable animals I have ever seen of the horse kind. The Yakuts, however, in most respects, are kind masters, as I have already remarked, and never beat a horse until all manner of mild means have been used; and then scolding is employed to try and make him tractable. Horse-flesh also is their favorite food, which they declare is much lighter and better flavored than beef. They use oxen about their homes for drawing wood and hay; and both the horses and cattle resemble those of the Tartars of the Step of Baraba, as much as the Yakuts themselves do that people.



The population of the province of Yakutsk is upwards of one hundred thousand souls, between eighty and ninety thousand of whom are Yakuts, and many of them were extremely rich ; but now there are few large proprietors. Indeed there is actually amongst them a very large proportion of poor, who, if it were not for the employment they find amongst the Russians, and the great cheapness of living, would be reduced to beggary. Many of them actually live, the greater part of the winter, on the inner bark of the yellow pine tree, scraped fine, and mixed with beef or horse's fat. I have been confidently informed, that the Yakut Princes and head men feed their labourers in this manner, giving them besides two miserable suits of clothes, and ten or twelve rubles per annum. This keeps the poor labourers constantly in debt; for the allowance of their masters both for food and raiment is insufficient.

The chiefs and head men are very fond of making presents to the Chief and other officers of Government, because it is for them a very profitable business. When a present is made, a collection takes place from all the Yakuts of the Ouloos ; and I have been assured the Prince generally collects at least twice the



amount of the present, taking care to put the surplus in his own pocket. This, and low wages together, have reduced the poorer class of Yakuts to a state of slavery; for, as they cannot pay their debts, they are obliged to serve those hard masters on their own terms. The tribes of Yakuts being now nearly all Christians and civilised, they ought to be put on the same footing with Russians, which would tend in a great measure to do away with a number of the abuses actually existing. Above all, measures should be adopted to abolish venality and *péculation*: that course seems necessary as well for the preservation as the prosperity of Siberia. The privileged classes should not be suffered to trade without taking out a license, which is actually the case, and whereby the merchant is injured, who pays the crown, and has to strive against an unfair competition.

Those Yakut labourers and herdsmen employed by the Russian inhabitants appeared to me to be very well off: for instance, a common labourer receives two really good and comfortable suits of clothes a year, and forty to fifty roubles in money, besides being very well fed. If a herdsman, and one who undertakes the care of twenty cows, he gets the milk of five or six cows for his trouble; and for the remaining



fourteen or fifteen, he is bound only to deliver thirty pounds of butter per cow to the owner during the summer. The skimmed milk, and whatever butter he may make beyond the quantity stipulated, are all his own. In case of accident or death of any of the herd, he is not responsible unless it happens through his want of care. From this statement it will be perceived that a herdsman has considerable advantages; for it must be a very bad cow that will not yield more than thirty pounds of butter during the summer. The Yakuts, however, know how to manage horses better than horned cattle. Their calves are never weaned until they are a year old; nor will a cow give down her milk unless the calf is brought to her; and if the calf dies she will give no more milk. This is a Yakut custom that only prevails in the eastern parts of Siberia.

They make butter by melting sour cream over the fire; after it is melted, it is strained into birch vessels and suffered to cool: the milk that remains is suffered to sour; and this, boiled with rye-flour, and called in their language *bor-dook*, is a favorite food, and, I believe, a very wholesome one.

Another dish they are fond of is *solimat*;



this is rye-flour and butter boiled in a copper kettle until it begins to burn a little, when hot water and salt are added occasionally, until the whole is well boiled. The flour and water form a kind of pudding, and the greater part of the butter floats on the surface, which the Yakut delights to sip with his *solimat*.

It is almost incredible how great a quantity of melted butter a Yakut will consume at a sitting. A gentleman, who has lived many years amongst them, assured me that he has seen at a wedding-feast the great butter-drinkers consume from twenty to thirty pounds per man ! The master of the house deems himself honoured, and is much delighted, to see half a dozen great butter-drinkers come to his feast, and these contend with each other in gluttony. At other times the Yakuts drink butter as a medicine, and I have known some of the Russians drink it, and declare it excellent for carrying down the bile; though I should have imagined it would have quite the contrary effect.

The Russian inhabitants of Yakutsk seem, indeed, to have adopted a number of the Yakut customs. At evening parties, between tea and supper, I have seen introduced frozen fish, sliced thin (called *strogonina*), frozen butter,



frozen cream, and dried beef, and have remarked that the ladies were particularly fond of them. In addition to those native delicacies, there are always two or three tables loaded with sweetmeats, dried fruits, cakes, and tarts, which are continually handed round during the evening, and I have often wondered how their appetites could last to conquer such heaps of food, and then crown all by eating a hearty supper. The first thing, however, that is offered to the guests is a glass of white wine each, and then the sweetmeats, &c.

It is but justice to declare, that the inhabitants of Yakutsk are hospitable to a fault, and always press their guests to eat and drink more than they wish. Strangers are always received there with the greatest kindness, attention, and generosity.

Of all the Siberian hordes, the Yakuts appeared to me the keenest and the cleverest. The wooden or log houses, of which the town is principally composed, are all built by Yakut workmen; and they certainly exhibit a great deal of solid excellent workmanship. Indeed, there is scarcely any work in cabinet-making or carving that a Yakut will not imitate well, with nothing but a knife and hatchet.



Their music may be said to be as devoid of melody as that of the Chinese.

They are, like all the people of Eastern Siberia, rather too fond of ardent spirits; but there are also very many sober good people among them. In general they are great talkers, and too much disposed to litigation. To gratify this passion, they have obtained permission from the Government of Irkutsk to have what is called in Russian a *doom*, or petty court of justice of their own, where their *golovoi*, or head man, with some of the princes, presides to decide the quarrels and disputes which occur amongst them. As the *doom* is at Yakutsk, of course the *golovoi* and the princes who preside, are obliged to live there, at a great expense; and this expense is paid by the Ouloses in general: they also receive handsome salaries. Here, then, is another plan of enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor; for I have been confidently informed that it has produced no good whatever; on the contrary, the Yakuts are constantly dissatisfied with the decisions, and almost invariably refer their causes to the Russian tribunals for a final settlement.

The natives pay a tribute to the government in sables and foxes; the sables are received at



seven roubles each, and the foxes at two roubles each; but I really wonder that the government does not, in preference, tax them in money, as being the more equitable way. Sables are worth twenty to twenty-five roubles each, and foxes seven to eight; therefore the poor Yakut receives too little, especially when he is oftentimes himself obliged to buy his yasak, or tribute.

The Siberian hordes, who are now intermixed with the Russians, and the majority of them christened, do certainly no longer deserve the appellation, by a word equivalent to "strangers;" but ought, on the contrary, to be placed on the same footing with the Russian population.



## CHAPTER XV.

Tabbaginsky station—An unlucky sail—A monastery—  
 Bastiak—Toyunses—Kutoree—Pillars and station of  
 Bottommy—Ozierinskoy—Forest scenery—Olekma—  
 Facts connected with that place—Boat conveyance  
 relinquished for that by horses—Recurrence of snow—  
 An awkward immersion—Striking natural features  
 along the route—A happy old woman—Oush-Kanskoy  
 station—The party resort again occasionally to sledges  
 —Morinsky and Khamarinsky station—Fish-broth—  
 Krestoff—Female equestrian skill—Town of Veetcem  
 —Resinský — Magnificent prospect — Doogrofskoy  
 —Chestinskoy—Islands on the Lena—Voronzora—  
 Breaking the ice in a literal sense—Change of scenery  
 —Espolskny — Vishinkanfsky — Snow and rain—  
 Picturesque winding of the Lena—Town of Kiringee  
 —An intrusive bear—Wretched condition of the boat-  
 men on the Lena—An unpleasant collision—Improve-  
 ment in the face of the country—Sukofskoy—Trooka  
 — Riga — Ponemarefsky — Korkina — Kumenskoy —  
 Town of Verkolinsk—Katchuck—A Mongol horde of  
 Burettas—Observations respecting the river Lena—  
 Curiosity of the Author's Chinese servants—Recent  
 advances in the cultivation of the soil—Judofsky—  
 Khomotova—Arrival at Irkutsk.

As the waters of the Lena were now very  
 low, and confined principally to the larger chan-



nels, it was necessary, in proceeding by them, to be drawn along by men until I arrived at the first post station, called Tabbaginsky, twenty-two versts off: we got there at about nine o'clock on the 29th. I had hired six peasants to assist in drawing my covered boat (called in Siberia a *towvosok*) at places where it was difficult for the horses. They were to receive thirty roubles each, and find themselves in every thing except tea and sugar (of which I promised them a little daily), and were to go fifteen hundred versts to Kiringee.

On the 30th it blew a gale of wind, and my Russian servant, who had been at sea, conceived he could make a sail of our tent, and go against the current more quickly than the men could draw us. He accordingly, whilst I was asleep, went into the middle of the river, and set his sail. The wind increasing, and being opposed to the current, the waves were raised very high, and our frail bark, scudding badly, broached to, and carried away one of the pintles of the rudder. As she lay rolling gunwale under, I awoke, and with the greatest difficulty, and not without breaking one of our oars, we got her fair before the wind again, where we reduced the sail, and in the course of half an hour got near the shore.



I then ordered my sailor not to attempt to set sail without my permission; for our boat was entirely put together with wooden pins, and, of course, not in the least calculated to resist the waves, which are there oftentimes as high as in the ocean.

On the 31st we procured horses from the post station, having sent a Cossack a-head to prepare them; and, in the evening, we got to a small village, where there is a monastery called Pokrovskoy. This village, the inhabitants of which are composed of Yakuts and Russians mixed, is situated on a fine plain, where there is excellent soil and good pasture. At present there is likewise good grain produced there.

We changed horses, and proceeded briskly all night, arriving about daylight, nineteen versts off, at Bastiak, on the 1st of September. Here we were detained awhile before we got a change of horses; but after getting them, we went on at a trot, and arrived at Toyunses, forty-two versts distant, by two o'clock in the afternoon. After stopping a short time, we pursued our journey until seven in the evening, when we found our course impeded by shallows and sandbanks; and darkness coming on, prevented our seeing the proper channel; we therefore stopped until day-



light, when we pushed on briskly again, arriving on the forenoon of the 2nd of September at Kutoree.

The banks of the Lena, thus far, are composed of low grounds, or high bluffs, with a small strip of level land between them; and the river is mostly bare of wood. We saw large flocks of various kinds of water fowl, which appeared to be winging their way to some more genial clime, until the warm weather should invite them back again.

After having crossed and re-crossed the river two or three times, we got at length to the well-known stolbeys (pillars) and station of Bottommy. For several versts above and below this station, a steep cliff presents itself, extremely rugged, cut into deep chasms, and representing often the ruins of castles, turrets, chimneys, and uncouth heaps of rocks of various fantastic shapes. That part called the pillars of Bottommy is composed of strata of a reddish stone, full of cracks, and resembling an old brick wall tumbling to decay. The top is crowned with forests, and trees are seen occasionally growing out of the crevices of the rocks. I suppose the river, at this place, to be at least two miles wide, and it has two or three beautiful islands in



the centre. We now tracked up the right bank slowly, the men being frequently obliged to cast off the horses, on account of the quagmires, and draw the boat themselves.

On the night of the 3rd of September, after we had passed a station called Ozierenskoy, the wind began to blow hard from the N. E. and was so keen and cold that we were obliged to paste paper on the cracks of the cover of our boat, and to have recourse to our furs to keep ourselves warm.

The banks of the river, for the last two days, had presented steep mountains, covered with fine forests of pine and spruce. Spruce gives a very lively appearance to the forests, when mixed amongst them, on account of the richness and freshness of its verdure. It is of all the evergreens the most pleasing, putting on its best attire when winter begins, and cheering, with its sprightly hue, the dreary forests of the north, when every other tree either loses its foliage, or so alters, as to remind us constantly of the severity of the season. The spruce appears to be the happy offspring of almost every climate; and wherever it is planted it flourishes, and makes the place of its abode wear a smiling aspect. I did not fail, in passing through Kamtchatka and



Siberia, to point out to the inhabitants the virtues of the spruce as an anti-scorbutic, of which they were ignorant; I thus showed them a remedy, as well as an antidote, at their own doors, for a disease they oftentimes acquire from indolence and bad food.

On the 26th of September, rain, hail, and snow, with a furious gale of wind, assailed us, and I now perceived, to my sorrow, that I should not long enjoy the ease of travelling in a boat on the water. The frost was very severe, and large quantities of ice began to descend the river; it snowed frequently, and the weather continued keen and cold until the 4th of October, when it rained all day. On the 5th, the rain changed to snow, which fell in quantities, and the wind blew a perfect hurricane, which made us proceed with exceeding slowness; but we had, notwithstanding, the good fortune to arrive at Olekma, where we met so much floating ice as to render it impossible to proceed any longer on the water.

Olekma is six hundred versts from Yakutsk, in latitude  $60^{\circ} 22' 0''$ , and east longitude from St. Petersburg  $89^{\circ} 15' 0''$ ; consisting of fifty to sixty houses, a church, magazines, &c. and from four to five hundred inhabitants: it is situated



on the declivity of a rampart of high mountains. At that time there was very little grain cultivated; but now they have wheat, rye, barley, and all sorts of vegetables in abundance. The forests in the neighbourhood afford very black and fine sables, which sell at a high price. This was formerly the capital town of the province (until the seat of government was removed to Yakutsk), and from hence the Cossacks carried on their wars with the natives. Those who penetrated to the Amour, and built the fort of Albasin on its banks, waged war for some time against the Chinese, and received their supplies from Olekma. They were, however, in a plentiful country, and the rye they sowed whilst at Albasin has spread over the soil, and produces natural crops even to this day. Three hundred and fifty Cossacks were besieged in their fortress by twenty-two thousand Chinese, and held out against them a whole year, until a capitulation was agreed upon, at a period when their force was reduced to only one hundred and fifty men. They had made frequent sallies from the fort, and killed a great many of the Chinese. I have been informed by a person who has been at Outskoy (the frontier Russian settlement, not far from the Amour), within a few years past, that the Chinese have



made large settlements on the Siberian side of the river; and he declared it to be one of the finest countries he ever saw for grain and pasture.

The sables caught by the Tongusees about Outskoy are of a very fine quality; but we unfortunately get very few of them. Our people in power at Yakutsk have not treated those traffickers well, and they now sell almost all their furs to the Chinese. In a direct line through Chinese Tartary and the best part of it, where there are no sandy plains, but a rich well-peopled country, Pekin is only distant about ten or twelve degrees from the banks of the Amour. The Amour is a deep safe river formed by the junction of the rivers Argoun and Shilka, both in Siberia; and the latter runs close by Nerchinsk; it may therefore be said properly to belong to Siberia as much as the two rivers which form it. It would certainly be an immense advantage if the flour destined for Kamtchatka could be shipped immediately on the Shilka instead of going down the Lena, to be packed at Yakutsk, and then carried upwards of one thousand versts on horses over the worst and most dangerous roads I ever travelled.

Although on the 8th there was very little



floating ice, yet the frost was so severe that the river was frozen some yards in width along the shores; I therefore made a present of my boat to my hospitable host, Mr. Miller, the commissary, and continued my journey on horseback.

It was snowing on the 9th, and very cold; but as I had dispatched my baggage on a-head two days previously, and the snow might continue for several days, I thought it best to proceed without farther delay. We had a disagreeable ride over a large body of meadowland skirting the left bank of the Lena, and arrived towards evening at Berdinskoy station, thirty-two versts distant, where we found a large comfortable warm jourta, that enticed us to pass the night rather than expose ourselves to such raw uncomfortable weather.

As my Chinese had not been on horseback since we left the Ochotsk road, I thought they would have complained of the cold and fatigue; but, being well furnished with warm clothing, they now seemed to bear the climate and all the inconveniences of the journey as well as ourselves. Although we had now had a fine clear day, and rather warm, the previous day had been such a one as belonged properly to the



depth of winter. The inconstancy of the climate along the Lena has been proverbial; it has however changed, and become much more regular and warm within the last twelve years.

We had a pleasant ride until towards evening, when it began to snow again, obliging us to stop early, the night being too dark to attempt to pass a creek that lay in our road. This not being yet completely frozen, we required daylight to pick our way.

On the 11th we passed two post-stations, and made a tolerably good journey, but were unfortunately overtaken by a snow-storm, and by the night, before we could get to where we wished to stop. The snow fell fast, and the moon gave but an imperfect light, such as barely permitted us to grope gently along. We had seven more versts to perform, as well as to cross a deep creek not long since frozen over, which I was fearful would not bear our horses and baggage. I therefore directed the yemshik (driver) to wait until I crossed first, and when he saw me safe on the other side, and then only, to take one horse at a time. When I got about the middle of the creek, which was not very wide, though deep, I felt the ice crack under the horses' feet, and immediately applied whip and spur until I



got on *terra firma*. I then cried out to my companions not to follow: but it was too late; the stupid yemshik had led on two loaded horses; and all broke through the ice in the most dangerous part. We got the man out with some long poles which happened to be near; but it cost us two hours, and infinite danger and trouble, to save the horses and baggage. By this accident my travelling-case, shaving-box, and some valuable papers and journals, were much injured. We all got completely wet, after which our clothes froze stiff upon us; and if I had not fortunately had some watky with me, we should have died with cold. Another inconvenience that arose out of this mishap was, that our thongs, ropes, and baggage became so cased with ice and slippery as to make it impossible to tie them on the horses; and thus they slid from their backs at every ten or fifteen minutes. This circumstance obliged us to go very slowly; so that we were all, in spite of two or three drams of watky, benumbed with the cold before we arrived at the station.

The next morning the weather was beautifully clear and mild; but we could not take advantage of it until late in the day, having been obliged



to dry my baggage and repair in the best manner practicable the misfortune of the preceding night.

Part of our road in the afternoon of the 12th lay close along the edge of the stream, under a huge pile of steep, rugged, but beautifully romantic cliffs and mountains, covered with spruce trees. One of the mountains was of a perfectly conical shape, and encircled with trees to the very pinnacle; whilst the summits of others exhibited rough broken crags, reared above the tops of the trees, capped with snow, and resembling the ruined battlements of ancient and enormous castles; thus giving a grandeur and majesty to the scene peculiarly striking. In the evening we passed a creek on the ice with more good fortune than in the case of the previous one, and arrived at a station called Matcha.

Here I found a clean comfortable dwelling, and a hospitable reception from the hostess, an old woman, who said she had been seventeen years in Siberia, having been sent by the Government from Archangel, to assist in increasing the population; but she thanked God, at the same time, that she had not been banished for misconduct. She told me she had always lived much better than she did in Russia, and



had been so happily situated as to have never felt a wish to return. Having received from her a fine fat fowl, some cream, vegetables, &c. I asked her in the morning what I must pay for them. She replied, "a little tea and sugar, a piece of soap, and above all a few glasses of watky—though I would not have you suppose I am addicted to liquor, for I only take a little now and then to preserve my health." Her emaciated frame and sallow countenance belied her assertion. Complying with her request, I begged her to preserve her health by using as little of the spirit as possible, as it often had the opposite effect to that of assisting the health. She laughed, and drinking a bumper to my advice, wished me a safe journey.

After a fatiguing journey on the 12th, we came to a station called Oushkanskoy, where I found a dirty uncomfortable house, full of cockroaches, and was obliged to sleep upon my baggage, and extinguish the fire, in order that the cold might make these reptiles return to their hiding holes.

I was happy to be off early on the 14th. We had scarcely accomplished four or five versts, when the baggage, which was on a young horse, being badly secured, turned under his belly,



and he plunged and kicked until he tore one of the portmanteaus all to pieces. This accident vexed me exceedingly, as I perceived it was entirely owing to the carelessness of the yemshik; and I could not but draw an unfavorable comparison between him and our Yakuts, who, during a journey of one thousand versts, had not suffered a single article to be injured.

The river was now so strongly frozen along the edges (and the ice covered with snow) that we occasionally left our horses for the more easy conveyance on sledges, which proved a very great relief to us.

On the 15th at night we arrived at Moorinsky station, and on the 16th set off on sledges, but were assailed by a severe snow-storm that lasted all day, and obliged us to stop early at a place named Khamarinsky, to pass the night. Our host gave me a fish called in Russian *naleme*, resembling a ling in flavour and appearance, but which my Chinese immediately said was a *bow-quang-eue*, of which there are plenty in China, though I never recollected to have seen any. The people of Siberia say the *naleme*, made into an *oukha*, or broth, is a useful medicine in cases of strangury, through having a peculiar diuretic effect. They are in great



abundance at Yakutsk, and so little esteemed that the rich seldom eat them; and I have seen very large ones, that would weigh at least a pood, sold for sixty to seventy kopeks each.

We set off again on sledges on the 17th. Our road lay along the shelving shores of the river, where the large stones were not quite covered with snow; and my yemshik contrived to overturn me twice, but fortunately without my receiving any other injury than a slight contusion of the shoulder. The name of the station where we passed the night was Krestoff.

The next morning, when about to start again, one of the horses became restive, and the yemshik, with all his endeavours, could not get him to move. A young girl about sixteen years old, who was standing near, seized the horse by the mane and sprang upon his back with the activity of a man. The horse started off immediately. She continued to ride him a verst or two, until he became gentle, and then returned home. I found afterwards that the young women along the Lena often act the part of yemshiks, particularly in the summer season, when the men are engaged with the harvest.

In the afternoon we were obliged to quit our sledges and proceed on horseback, the road



being quite narrow along the shore under perpendicular cliffs, whose bases, occasionally protruding into the river, obliged us to pass round them on the ice. Our horses, not being shod, fell frequently, and endangered our necks. Night, and a chilling snow-storm, added to a rough rocky road, increased our embarrassment, and at length we were obliged to dismount, and literally crawl and grope our way for four or five versts, until we arrived at Veeteem covered with snow, cold, weary, and hungry. However, we got comfortable lodgings and a good supper, which made us forget our fatigue.

Veeteem is a town as large as Olekma, and is also famous for its fine black sables, and for being the depôt of the talc that is collected on the river of the same name, at the mouth of which the town is built.

On the next day (the 18th) we were more fortunate, setting off, at ten o'clock, and making two stations, so as to reach Resinsky by eleven o'clock at night.

On leaving this station, on the 19th, I was much struck with the magnificence of its situation, on the sloping declivity of a hill, that rises gradually to the base of an immense rampart of steep forest-covered mountains, which surround



it in the form of a crescent, while the superb Lena flows at its feet. The scene was so truly sublime and commanding, I could not help ordering the driver to stop, that I might contemplate it. It is however but one of thousands which adorn that magnificent river. Not far off we met with a mountain-torrent; but it was fortunately shallow; and the yemshiks waded it, carrying the baggage on their shoulders. A good method of passing such streams would be to have a small raft, about twelve feet square, moored fast for the use of travellers. This would always be preserved, when bridges would be swept away by the sudden swelling of the rivulets.

Our road this day was on the ice, which cracked with us two or three times, and we were at length alarmed. We kept moving slowly along on a rough shore, badly covered with snow, until we came, about midnight, to Doogrofskoy, a small village, situate on the declivity of a mountain that overlooks the Lena.

On the 20th we left this place on horseback, and passed over some of the steepest mountains we had seen since we left the Ochotsk road; having been frequently obliged to dismount in places where the horses with difficulty descended



even without their riders. After leaving the mountains, we again continued along the shore, under a large extent of steep rugged perpendicular cliffs, towering to the height of two or three hundred feet. They were, as usual, moulded into fantastic shapes, bringing to the imagination the ruins of the giants' castles of old; the mouldering turrets and battlements are so well represented that it is difficult to persuade one's self the hand of art has not been employed on those singular works of nature. As we passed beneath, they frowned with awful grandeur above our heads; nor could we behold them without emotions of terror, as well as admiration. Leaving those cliffs, we again ascended some steep mountains, and from their summits had several superb views of the majestic Lena winding down amongst them. The forests through which we passed were principally of the yellow pine, of a large growth; and the soil on the mountains, whose ascent was gradual, appeared rich and good, and capable of producing grain of all sorts, more particularly as the tops were level for a considerable extent. Most of the settlements on the Lena are either on the level spots along the edge of the river, or on the declivities of the mountains; agriculture



might certainly be carried to their summits with success.\*

During the day we had sunshine, hail, and snow, two or three times in succession, and at length a severe snow storm—obliging us to remain all night at a station called Chestinskoy, where we had the good fortune to arrive just as it commenced.

The 21st brought us fine weather again, and we continued our journey over another steep romantic cliff, such as those already described, only more beautiful, if possible; the trees, which grew from the crevices of the rock, being all spruce, whose lively verdure formed a pleasing contrast with the rugged snow-capped peaks and promontories. Two or three islands, well wooded, divided the waters of the Lena, and diversified the prospect, which repaid us for the roughness of the road. The latter was so rocky, we were forced to keep our horses at a slow walk.

During the evening we passed through the

\* Passing up the river in the summer of 1826, I had the satisfaction to see those very mountains covered with grain fields; such progress has agriculture made in the course of a few years. They find the crops succeed better there than in low situations.



village of Voronzova, composed of ten or twelve houses, in the vicinity of which there is a body of good meadow ground; and the rye stubbles, but thinly covered with snow, showed that crops had been good. The inhabitants all along the Lena complain of the want of sufficient level land for meadows, as if hay might not be produced on high grounds; besides, if a European farmer were to see the careless manner in which they clear their land for mowing, he would smile at their complaint, and ask them why they had not grubbed up the willows and other bushes, which occupy at least a sixth part of the soil? Nature is so bountiful in Siberia, they expect her to furnish all their wants almost without assistance.

Previously to our arrival at a station called Oudinsky, we passed under another large extent of high broken cliffs, such as before described, and which excited some unpleasant sensations when we observed large heaps of rocks that had been loosened from their pinnacles, and had fallen upon the shore. Our guides, however, assured us this only happened in the spring, at the thawing of the frost.

We were now obliged to travel on the ice, the bases of the cliffs protruding to the edge of



the river, and we found it by no means as strong as we expected; I, therefore, ordered the yemshiks to keep as near the shore as possible. Night had overtaken us, but it was fortunately not so dark but that we could see our way. Our drivers, who were rather careless, and forgot my injunctions, got too far from the shore, when, all of a sudden, the three sledges, which happened at that instant to be very near together, all broke through the ice at the same time. It was a lucky circumstance that the ice did not break into cakes, but, on the contrary, into one large hole, and, before we got completely wet, we contrived to scramble over the horses, and get upon the solid ice; it cost us, however, some time and trouble to extricate three sledges and nine horses, as the edges of the ice, at the hole, broke through for eight or ten yards farther, before we found it strong enough to bear a horse. My baggage again suffered severely by this accident, and, although quite near to a station, we were all stiff with ice before we got there. I should have made a much better journey if I had waited fourteen or fifteen days longer at Yakutsk, to give the rivulets and torrents time to freeze, and the winter road to be fairly established. The setting out so early



not only obliged me to change frequently my mode of travelling, but was also both difficult and dangerous.

On the 22d I was obliged to perform another station on horseback, in consequence of the steep mountains, whose bases rose perpendicular from the water's edge; and the ice was too weak to support our sledges. After descending those mountains, however, we came at length into a fine level country, more thickly inhabited and better cultivated, meeting, at every few versts, farm-houses, villages, and the stubbles of wheat, rye, barley, and oats, by which it was manifest that the crops had been plentiful. Several well cultivated islands divided the Lena into various branches, and served to heighten the beauties of a scene, which, although it was covered with snow, was highly picturesque and interesting.\*

In the evening we passed through a large village, containing seventy or eighty houses and a church, and named Espolskny. It is now much increased, as is also another village, called Vish-

\* In the summer of 1826 I had the pleasure of examining this part of the country more minutely, and found that agriculture had made its way to the tops of those very mountains I had formerly passed over when covered with forests.



nikaufsky, not far from it, which had then about twenty to thirty houses. We saw no more of the Yakuts; the country every where seemed peopled with Russians; but these are by no means equal in stature and appearance to the natives of the western parts of Siberia. They are generally men of small stature and sallow complexions, and appear to possess less vigour and energy than the western Siberians, who are in fact, beyond comparison, the finest race of men I ever saw.

It snowed plentifully on the 23d, and we again had some mountains to pass, but as they were not steep, we performed the journey in sledges, though we found a bad road, where we were some times obliged to walk through a deep snow,—and were heartily tired ere we got over them. The weather, all of a sudden, became quite warm, and the snow turned to rain, which fell in abundance. On descending the mountains towards a village called Gorobofskoy, I was charmed with the superb view we had of the Lena, that made a serpentine course in the shape of an S, through a rich valley, where we saw villages, farm-houses, hay-stacks, cattle, horses, stubble-fields, &c. offering, in a single *coup. d'œil*, an assemblage of such interesting



and attractive objects as impressed the beholder with a conviction that industry, peace, and plenty, had there taken up their abode. As the greater part of our road over the mountains led through wild forests, without a human habitation, the reader will readily imagine the effect of such a contrast bursting suddenly on the view.

After changing horses at the station, I continued on a few versts farther, and stopped to dine at a peasant's house, where I was hospitably entertained with the best of every thing, and got a fine fat sheep, all for three roubles in paper money: the mutton was small, but very tender and well-flavoured. During the day we passed through five or six villages, each of which had not less than twenty or thirty houses. In the evening the bank again was mountainous, and was covered with thick forests of the yellow pine, spruce, ash, birch. &c. which we passed through with difficulty, (it being now quite dark,) and did not arrive at the ferry opposite to the town of Kiringee, until eleven o'clock at night. Although the river is not more than half a verst wide at this spot, the weather had been so mild that it was only half frozen over, so that midnight arrived before we got across



with our baggage, and procured a lodging for the night. The hospitable commissary had already sent me an invitation to put up at his dwelling; but, as he lived a considerable distance off, and I was cold, weary, and hungry, I begged him to excuse me, and hastened to repose myself in a comfortable little house belonging to the ferry-man, that was quite near at hand.

On the morning of the 24th I received fresh invitations from the commissary, the town major, and others, who came to see me, and in the most hospitable manner requested me to spend a few days with them. However, I excused myself, being pressed to get to Irkutsk, and ordered my horses should be prepared to start again at twelve o'clock.

Kiringee is a town composed of upwards of two hundred houses, with four churches and a monastery, and is situated on an island formed by one of the branches of the Lena. There is but a small quantity of meadow-ground, so that the inhabitants can keep but few cattle or horses; and, as the Lena there is by no means abundant in fish, it is one of the dearest and poorest spots between Yakutsk and Irkutsk. The only thing the inhabitants of Kiringee can boast of is their vegetables: potatoes, cabbages,



beets, carrots, onions, &c. are there produced in immense quantities, and sent down the Lena by barque loads, for sale, even as far as Yakutsk. A number of the people of this place, and its neighbourhood, are constantly engaged in navigating the barques and boats on the Lena, which convey flour, passengers, merchandise, &c. to and from Yakutsk.

In the summer of 1827, the last time I passed up the Lena, our vessel was tracked against the stream from Yakutsk to Kiringee, fifteen hundred versts, by forty men, in thirty days. Twenty men at a time were employed by turns, day and night. One night, between Veeteem and Olekma, I was awakened by a loud shouting of the people on shore, who were dragging the boat; on my going upon deck and inquiring the cause, the captain told me there was a large bear, that kept within thirty or forty paces of them, seemingly with an intent to attack them, and that although they stopt several times, and shouted aloud, they could not frighten him away. He, therefore, begged me to load my gun and fire it off, to see if the report would not alarm him, and make him leave them. I complied with his request, and after I had fired twice, Mr. Bruin made off into the woods, to the great joy of the



party on shore, who knew well that a black Siberian bear is a very dangerous animal when pressed by hunger.

I remarked, that those poor fellows who track the boats up the Lena are badly paid, exposed to great fatigue, and not well fed. The Government of Irkutsk ought to oblige the captains and owners of the vessels navigating the Lena, to pay those people equitable wages, and furnish them with a full allowance of bread and meat, and a dram when exposed to cold and rain. There being no regulations by law on this head, many of the poorer peasants hire themselves to go down in the barques, for a few roubles, to pay their tax to the crown, and return also for a mere song; oftentimes for only ten roubles and their food.\* By this means, having nothing left to buy clothes, they run in debt to the rich proprietors, and being rarely able to extricate themselves, when once embarrassed, they become literally slaves. Many of the peasants told me that they were so much in debt, that they were forced to go down the Lena every season at the price the proprietor thought fit to give them, merely

\* The distance is three thousand versts, going and returning.



to get their taxes paid to government. I mention these circumstances because I think they might be readily corrected. The people who tracked our boat up would have suffered severely if it had not been for the assistance I gave them in food, and likewise in leather to sole their shoes, many of them being quite bare-footed. From Kiringee up to Katchuk the boats are drawn by horses, the river being too rapid to track them with men.

Kiringee, it is seen, is the most disadvantageously situated, in point of natural resources, of any place on the Lena, and it has the additional inconvenience of being overflowed almost every season at the breaking up of the ice.

On the 12th, as soon as my horses were ready, I departed; and, as it was Sunday, the Yemshiks, I perceived, had made very free with the bottle. After quitting the island we had some mountains to cross (for about 25 or 30 versts), which form the right bank of the Lena, and approach it too nearly for travellers to pass it at their base. The roads were bad, being impeded with trees; and our sledges were overturned several times. My driver's drunkenness and carelessness together had very nearly been the cause of our being crushed to death. He ran



my sledge violently against an old dead tree of a large size, that stood near the road side; and, as it was very rotten, the shock broke off the upper half, which fell with a thundering crash within a foot or two of our heads, and so very near the horses, that I thought at first they were both killed. Fortunately the butt of the tree had a bend in it that inclined it off the road, and it was without branches. One would have imagined such an accident would have scared the horses, and made them run off; but it seemed to have the contrary effect. Even the horses which were going on at a trot with the other sledges, were so frightened at the tremendous sound produced, that with one accord they stopped suddenly and began to tremble. The noise of the fall resembled that of a clap of thunder, and made the whole forest re-echo to the sound far and wide. Our companions were no less alarmed than their horses, and, until the business was explained to them, they conceived there had been a violent convulsion of nature. I certainly never had a narrower escape; and this accident ought to serve as a warning to all commissaries, and persons having the superintendence of roads, never to suffer rotten trees to remain near them. It afforded me some sa-



tisfaction to perceive that the fright my yemshik experienced had rendered him quite sober; and he afterwards conducted the sledge down the mountains with great caution. We now passed briskly along over the stubble and grain fields; saw a mill and several farm-houses, and stopped at a good distance off, at the station called Makrofskoy.

It snowed plentifully on the 26th, making the day dark and dismal, and covering the old tracks, so as to increase the difficulty we experienced in passing over a very bad road until we arrived at Barcaufskoy Perëvoz, or ferry, twenty-one versts off, whence we were transported to the left bank of the Lena. Here we found a level country again, well cultivated, and interspersed with farm-houses, where there appeared to be pigs, sheep, and poultry of all sorts in abundance. I observed that the ploughs the farmers use in Siberia are extremely uncouth and unwieldy. Indeed all they want is to scratch up the ground, for the soil is so rich it needs no manure for many years, and not much working, to produce grain. The first crops of the strongest grain, namely rye, often run to stalk. They need a few lessons in rural economy, and particularly in the management of dairies,



for they make bad butter and no cheese. A little knowledge of the art of husbandry saves much precious time and labour, the economy of which, in a country so thinly peopled, is a matter of the first importance.

From the time we left Yakutsk we had found the country improve gradually, and the post-houses throughout comfortable, clean, and convenient; much more so than I expected to find in remote Siberia. The horses likewise were always furnished with great alacrity; and the inhabitants generally were kind and hospitable.

We spent the night at a small village named Sukofskoy, and set off again early on the morning of the 27th, travelling over a fine level country along the banks of the river. The mountains on either side receded to a considerable distance, leaving a fine space for meadows and grain fields, which was embellished by villages and farm-houses. Every day the country wore a more interesting appearance. We accomplished three stations during this day, and passed the night at a place called Oushkoota.

On the 28th we also made a good journey, stopping for the night at a little village consisting of ten or twelve houses, called Trooka, where I found very comfortable lodgings, and



amiable obliging people. Indeed I was much struck with the appearance and countenances of the inhabitants, whose faces wore the smiles of good nature and the bloom of good health, not commonly met with along the Lena. Part of our road on the 28th was mountainous; we were obliged to cross the Lena twice, and towards night stopped at a village on the left bank named Riga.

On the 29th we passed through a country where there were several villages; and the 30th brought us to a very large one called Ponemarefskoy, where we experienced great difficulty in crossing the river, as the ice was thrown up in heaps, and the horses fell several times in making their way over them.

Cultivation and improvement seemed to increase as we advanced. In many parts I observed large forests, where the trees had been barked and killed, and grain sowed amongst them, and where the stacks of rye were always very numerous. Before arriving at the village of Korkina we passed under a steep and curious cliff, composed of red slate rock, cut into fantastic forms and covered with trees. Again, after leaving the village of Kumenskoy, sixteen versts farther, the bank of the river was a steep



ridge of forest-covered mountains, cut into deep chasms, and even those were filled with trees. During twenty-four versts farther our road lay along the edge of a steep precipice, where there was barely room for a single sledge to pass; and we were well pleased when we found ourselves safe past it, in a fine, open, cultivated country, at a town named Verkholinsk, composed of two churches and one hundred and fifty houses.

It being a fine moon-light night, and the roads good, after taking a cup of tea, I pushed on briskly, and we passed the night at the next station called Katchuk. This is the place where all the merchandise, &c. is embarked in the spring for Yakutsk and other towns on the Lena. The river is generally free enough from ice by the 5th or from that to the 12th of May, and during the time of preparing the boats, &c. for their departure, the merchants hold a fair at this place. When I descended the Lena in the spring of 1818, I was only fourteen days going to Yakutsk in a large flat-bottomed covered boat, about forty feet in length, and proportionably wide. It was divided into three or four apartments, in one of which was a stove that added much to our comfort.

On arriving at Katchuk I found I had con-



quered all the great difficulties of the road. A fine extensive plain now presented itself before me, bounded on either side by well cultivated hills, and having villages and farm-houses dispersed over it in all directions. This plain is principally inhabited by a horde called Burettas,\* (in Russian, brats) who are for the most part Christians, and have taken to agriculture with a great deal of industry and zeal. Indeed many of them already surpass their Russian neighbours; besides which they keep large flocks of an excellent race of broad-tailed sheep, (of which the mutton is very delicious) and understand well the care of cattle and horses.†

After being long accustomed to behold the wild scenes of uncultivated nature, those which now presented themselves were both novel and delightful, and produced a luxurious sensation of satisfaction, which those who have never experienced the transition cannot easily imagine. I had now quitted the Lena, whose banks I had coursed along, mostly on horseback, for two thousand three hundred and seventy versts; not

\* A horde of Mongols, who speak a dialect of the Mongol language.

† Those who live in the neighbourhood of the Baical keep camels.



quite half of the entire distance it runs from its source near the Baical, on the borders of China, to disembogue itself into the Frozen Ocean. It is one of the safest navigable rivers of its size in the world, and is only very rapid in the spring, at the breaking up of the ice and melting of the snows, when numerous tributary rivers and torrents, bursting their icy fetters, rush with impetuosity into the maternal bosom of the Lena.\*

\* This river, from its source to Yakutsk, a distance of about two thousand six hundreds versts, receives from fifty to sixty rivers and torrents, as may be seen in the following list of the streams which pour their waters into the Lena between Katchuk and Yakutsk :—

No.				Names.
1. Creek	-	-	-	Beroulka.
2. Idem	-	-	-	Anga.
3. River	-	-	-	Manzourka.
4. Idem	-	-	-	Toutourah.
5. Idem	-	-	-	Orlinga.
6. Idem	-	-	-	Kiringa.
7. Small river	-	-	-	Chaika.
8. River	-	-	-	Tchouia.
9. Idem	-	-	-	Vitime.
10. Idem	-	-	-	Olekma.
11. Small river	-	-	-	Tolba.
12. Idem	-	-	-	Graznucha.
13. Idem	-	-	-	Tolbatchan.
14. Idem	-	-	-	Ceinia.
15. Idem	-	-	-	Joura.
16. Idem	-	-	-	Sonnayestakh.



Notwithstanding the vast quantity of water poured into the Lena, in the beginning of

No.		Names.
17.	Small river	Marktha.
18.	Idem	Lommannah.
19.	Idem	Salanka.
20.	Idem	Tollalaika.
21.	Idem	Tcherripannika.
22.	Idem	Berouk.
23.	River	Matcha.
24.	Idem	Kammina.
25.	Idem	Jirbah.
26.	Idem	Neuia.
27.	Small river	Mouria.
28.	Idem	Khamarah.
29.	Idem	Koukie.
30.	Idem	Chanchakie.
31.	Idem	Yellovie.
32.	River	Krestova.
33.	Idem	Pelladova.
34.	Idem	Ekhorra.
35.	Idem	Scobenska.
36.	Idem	Taiura.
37.	Idem	Tiéra.
38.	Idem	Kosarkie.

39. { The place where the large  
vessels discharge and load  
their cargoes on smaller craft  
to mount the shallows } Yakorum.

40.	River	Oust Kouta.
41.	Idem	Oust Ilga.
42.	Small river	Koulinga.

Many of those called small rivers are mountain torrents; but all those called rivers are navigable.



autumn, from Kiringee to Katchuk, the river is so shallow that the vessels are obliged to unload their cargoes on flat-bottomed boats, in order to get them conveyed to Katchuk. The moment the rains set in, the channels are deepened again, and become passable. To descend and behold the Lena in the spring, at the breaking up of the ice, is a truly sublime spectacle, particularly where the stream passes through what are called the gates; the whole river being confined in a narrow channel, between two rugged cliffs, such as before described, near three hundred feet perpendicular, whose bases project into the stream. The current strikes first against the rocks of the right bank, and is thrown off with violence against the high bluff on the opposite shore, where it is again repelled in eddies and whirlpools, until it passes round the cliff on the left bank, which forms an elbow, into a wider channel. One would imagine a boat passing down would be hurried rapidly from the right bank, and dashed against the rocks on the left; but this is not the case. With a little exertion in rowing, a boat is easily kept in the centre of the current; the water that is repelled from the left bank, though it often whirls her round and round, preserves her from being



driven on the rocks. Between those two cliffs there is a counter-current on either hand, which remounts until it meets the main stream again.

Although we left the Lena bound in ice, we had only made a few stations into the Buretta region, when we found the country entirely free from snow; the climate, of course, much warmer—and we were obliged to continue our journey to Irkutsk on wheeled carriages. These we procured at the post stations: they are without springs, very rough, and are called in the Russian language povoskies. My Chinese servants were much astonished to find themselves, all of a sudden, in a country without snow, and amongst a people who resembled them exceedingly in every thing but their dress. They made me a hundred curious questions concerning their origin, and how a people apparently Chinese could have a language so very different, and come to live in Siberia?

The dwellings of the poorer class of the Burettas resemble the winter jourtas of the Yakuts; but the latter are certainly more comfortable. As it regards cleanliness, neither of those hordes seems much addicted to that, unless it be the richer classes, who imitate the Russians, and many of whom build themselves izbas, or log-



houses, in the same style. Many of the cabins of the poor Burettas are composed of only one large room, where all the family live, and sometimes a cow and some sheep are also included.

Their clothing consists of a pelisse of dressed goats' or sheep's skin, with the hair or wool inside, which they turn outside when they find it too warm. It is generally trimmed with some sort of fur, and painted with black and red stripes about the neck and shoulders; and there is an exact sameness in their dress which makes them all look alike: I mean the common class, for the knaszets, or princes, dress out in fine cloths and costly furs, and are, many of them, tall good-looking men. The hair is worn in a long plat, like the Chinese, hanging down the back; and the head is covered with a shaggy goat-skin cap, brought up to a peak, and which gives them a wild appearance. It is somewhat remarkable that the word *thaisha* is pronounced by the Japanese and the Burettas in the same manner, and in both languages has the same signification—a *chief*.

The Burettas now exhibit as much attachment to agriculture as the Russians, and, in many instances, excel them in the cultivation of grain. They make great use of oxen, and



tackle oftentimes a single ox to a light cart with immense large wheels, which are also slightly made, and certainly are more easily drawn than those of a lesser circumference.

I was not a little astonished to see, in 1827, the amazing progress population and agriculture had made, during an absence of ten years, between Katchuk and Irkutsk. From a hill, after passing a station called Judofsky, one has a fine prospect of the surrounding country, laid out in corn fields, and interspersed with villages, farms, &c. One of those villages, which we passed through, called Oiyuk, had then a couple of churches, and upwards of two hundred houses, but is now quite a town.

Our drivers drove so furiously I was alarmed lest they should upset us, and had some difficulty to prevail on them to keep a moderate rate of going. The jolting of the povosky was almost insupportable. It had, however, the effect of producing so good an appetite that I was obliged to stop at a place called Khomotova, only one station from Irkutsk, to gratify it by eating my dinner.

Here I rested; and I found myself so well supplied and so comfortable, that I did not set off till late in the afternoon. On descending a



hill only a few versts from Irkutsk, we had a fine panoramic view of the town, the river Angarra, and a fertile, well-cultivated country immediately in the neighbourhood.

As I arrived at Irkutsk late in the evening, I did not pay my respects to the Governor until the following morning, when I had got over my fatigue. He received me with the usual Siberian hospitality, and promised to show me every thing that was worth looking at in the town and its environs.



## CHAPTER XVI.

Description of the town and inhabitants of Irkutsk—Workshops of the Exiles—Humane policy of the Russian Penal Code—Manufactories—Ship-yards—General improvement in the place—The Governor-General, the Governor, and the Commandant-General—Society of Irkutsk—Climate—Author proceeds on his journey towards St. Petersburg—Thelminsky factory—Hospitality experienced there—Krasnoyesk—Two Soldiers engaged as the Author's escort—General remarks on the virtues belonging to the inhabitants of Siberia—An abuse pointed out—Arrival at Tomsk.

IRKUTSK is situated in North latitude  $52^{\circ} 16' 41''$ , and in East longitude from the meridian of St. Petersburg,  $73^{\circ} 51' 48''$ . It is built on a plain at the foot of a hill, occupying the concave of a crescent formed by the winding course of the river Angarra. Another small river, called Oushakofsky, runs at the back of the town, the water of which is very clear and wholesome; whilst that of the Angarra, being



strongly impregnated with lime, disagrees with many people, and particularly strangers. It is said also that it corrodes and spoils very quickly the linen that is constantly washed in it.

The town is composed of one thousand eight hundred and thirty wooden houses, thirteen churches, two monasteries, twenty manufactories, seven hospitals, an orphan-house, public schools, prisons, houses of correction, barracks, cavalry-stables, magazines, mills, and several other public buildings. Twenty-four of the private and seventeen of the public buildings are of brick.

The inhabitants amount to upwards of fifteen thousand souls, consisting of military and civil officers, soldiers, clergy, Cossacks, merchants, tradesmen, servants, and exiles.\*

There are excellent markets for meat, fish, flour, &c. which are amply provided with pro-

\* I must inform the reader this calculation was made 1813, since when Irkutsk has increased greatly both in size and population. Many handsome brick buildings, public and private, have been erected. The Governor-General of Eastern Siberia and the Governor of Irkutsk both residing there, the town is rendered more lively, and the society has assumed much more polished manners than formerly.



visions, and exceedingly cheap. When I was last there, in 1826, flour was from fifty to seventy kopeks per pood, beef two roubles and a half to three, and poultry of all sorts at a very low price, as well as vegetables, which are there abundant beyond measure. Even the wines and other luxuries of Europe are carried thither and sold at a very moderate price, so that the traveller is truly surprised, not only to find a well-built populous town, but also a genteel pleasant society, and almost all the luxuries of life, in the very heart of Siberia.

The river Angarra, that runs out of the Baical Sea, is not very well supplied with fish; but the Sea itself, which is only sixty-seven versts off (following the course of the river) abounds with all sorts of fish. The most important fishery, however, is that of a species of herring called *Omoulé*, which are there taken in great quantities, and salted. They are larger than a common herring; but the shape is similar, and the flavour, in my opinion, when the fish is well salted, superior to the other.

Owing to the rapidity of the stream of the Angarra, and the mildness of the climate, it is seldom frozen over before the 1st of January,



and breaks up again from the 15th to the 20th of March. It is about two versts wide opposite to the town, where it receives a tributary stream half as large as itself, called Irkout, and afterwards several others, in its way to join the Tongouska. The Tongouska falls into the Inneceisk, that disembogues itself into the Frozen Ocean at the Bay of the Seventy-two Islands, about two degrees to the eastward of Nova Zembla.

According to his promise, the Governor called on me on the 6th, and conducted me through a number of the public buildings; particularly the jail, workhouses, hospitals, manufactories, &c.

There is one immense large brick building not far from the little river Oushakofskoy, where I found the workshops of the exiles. In that large range one sees joiners, carpenters, carriage-makers, saddlers, blacksmiths, and in short all sorts of tradesmen, busily occupied, and all provided with comfortable apartments, clean clothing, and wholesome food. From this we passed to the cloth factory, the contemplation of which afforded me much pleasure, when I recollected that those beings before me, who were once the victims of depravity, exhi-



bited no longer any thing to inspire me with the idea of their having been criminals. All was gaiety and cheerfulness. There I saw men, women, and children, all industriously employed in weaving, spinning, carding, picking wool, &c. They were arranged in several large, clean, warm, and comfortable apartments; and they really appeared as contented as any labourers I ever saw; for they looked fat and healthy.

The cloth is made from the wool and hair of the Buretta sheep, camels, and goats. It stands the Government in about a rouble the arshin, and sells for two roubles. This profit, after paying the expenses of the manufactory, leaves a surplus that is used to furnish the hospitals, and for other laudable purposes. Such an institution does honour to any country; nor can there be a more praiseworthy application of the industry of those exiles than that which operates to relieve the sick, the fatherless, and the widow.

There is every reason to conclude, from the examples which have been furnished by those countries which have adopted this system, that the idea of confinement and hard labour is a more powerful preventive of the commission of



crimes than the fear of death. Solitary confinement, hard labour, and bread and water for several years, present more horrors to the imagination than scaffolds, ropes, axes, fetters, and all the sanguinary *insignia* of justice. Blush! ye countries of a longer civilization, that Russia should teach ye the celestial principle of reforming depraved morals; not by the sanguinary execution of inexorable justice, but by the mild and divine precepts of heavenly mercy!

It is not merely the antiquity of the social compact that gives a nation a just title to the appellation of civilized, but the improvement of that compact by the banishing of barbarous practices, by the establishing of noble and useful institutions, and by the equitable administration of such wholesome laws as will tend not only to correct the vices of our nature, but also to alleviate the misery attendant on them.

The above single example, of a nature whereof very many could be produced, is sufficient to inspire us with respect for the mild system adopted by the Sovereigns of Russia, in preference to the cruel practice of extirpation. As it is impossible to prevent the growth of large cities, it seems equally difficult to hinder the increase of bad morals. Happy then is the



nation whose mild and wholesome laws tend to correct what cannot be prevented, and to retrieve the errors of human frailty. There are sufficient casualties, such as wars, diseases, &c. to diminish the too rapid increase of population, without having recourse to an organized system of destruction. Peaceful must be the slumbers of the monarch whose mercy, like the genial heat of the sun, is felt and confessed throughout his dominions. In the consciousness of doing good in the most essential point, that of endeavouring after the eternal welfare of his subjects, who can bear away the palm from such a Sovereign? He, like a beloved father surrounded by his dutiful children, reposes securely in the bosom of his vast family, and may cause even the unambitious lover of mediocrity to envy the felicity of his palace! Although I know that many volumes have already been written against the severity of the penal laws generally, I do not fear to fatigue my readers by showing them what the mitigation of those laws in Russia has produced in distant Siberia. Cold, dreary, and inhospitable as she has been represented by her enemies, with her the needy wretch finds plenty and consolation, rising and throwing off the cumbrous load of crime that once oppressed him,



and with lightness of heart again pursuing the paths of virtue and contentment. Then may we say to those of milder climes, who boast of all the luxuries of nature—"Siberia, has a moral warmth within her bosom, producing estimable fruits, such as are not only acceptable to man, but, as we may trust, to the great and all-powerful Being who made him." Then, Siberia mayest thou call on those Sovereigns of the East and West, who still persist in avenging crime with blood, to cast but a glance on thy once desert, but now cultivated and peopled tracts, and they will, blushing, sheathe for ever in its scabbard the thirsty and unhallowed glaive of a cruel and mistaken justice.\* If we reflect that crimes are oftentimes produced by the plans which are deemed necessary to the wealth and prosperity of nations, surely some little indulgence ought to be granted to the few who may be considered as sacrificed for the benefit of the mass. Houses of correction, manufactories,

\* In Siberia those who have been guilty of murder and other atrocious acts, are not mixed indiscriminately with other exiles. Those first mentioned are sent to work in the mines; but those guilty of petty crimes either work in manufactories, or are merely transplanted to Siberia as colonists, and till the ground as peasants.



&c. may be easily established in every country; and surely in this way criminals may be rendered good subjects, and useful to the state, at the same time that they are allowed opportunity to reflect on their past errors, and make their peace with their offended God.

After visiting all the manufactories, I went to see the ship-yards, where I saw a brig on the stocks, destined to navigate the Baical. The vessels generally used in that sea are built on its shores, on account of the difficulty of ascending against the current of the Angarra. Those belonging to the Government are employed principally to carry convicts and stores, &c. to Nerchinsk, where there are mines of silver, gold and precious stones. The district of Nerchinsk is also very abundant in grain.

Few places in the world are surrounded by a more prolific soil and a more plentiful country than Irkutsk; their best beef, however, comes from Krasnoyarsk; that is to say, large quantities of cattle are driven from thence, and killed at Irkutsk. In the market places the stranger is surprised and amused by the variety of costumes which compose the crowd before him; amongst which the Burettas, with their shaggy goat-skin caps, make an uncouth appearance.



The last time I visited this place (in 1827), I observed a great change in the town and its inhabitants for the better; indeed, throughout Siberia, the improvements which have taken place, in various ways, within the last ten or twelve years are peculiarly striking.

It would be injustice not to mention the polite and hospitable treatment we received from his Excellency, Mr. Lavinsky, the Governor-General, and his Excellency the Governor, Mr. Zeidler, and his amiable lady and family, and likewise from the Commandant-General Pokrovsky, during four months that we resided there. A genteel pleasant society really exists there, and one might very well imagine oneself at one of the large provincial towns of Russia.

The climate of Irkutsk is the mildest of all Siberia, resembling much that of Moscow, except that I believe the summers are hotter at Irkutsk. In ordinary seasons the thermometer of Reaumur seldom exceeds thirty to thirty-four degrees of cold, and this but at short intervals; and the river Angarra opens in the month of March. No doubt but the climate of Siberia, like the climates of many other countries, will be rendered more endurable by the effects



of population, industry, and improvement. Wherever man fixes his abode, nature seems to yield to his exertions, and will mould every thing with a kind and plastic hand, to suit his wants and wishes.

On the afternoon of the 25th of November, I took leave of my hospitable acquaintances, and having obtained a Cossack to accompany me, proceeded on my journey towards St. Petersburg.

About nine o'clock in the evening we arrived at a place called Thelminsky Factory, situated on a small stream that falls into the Angarra, about sixty versts from Irkutsk. Here there is a cloth and glass manufactory, belonging to the government, wherein exiles are employed in the same manner as before described at Irkutsk. This little settlement, that contains from 1500 to 2000 souls, is beautifully situated, and the buildings generally are constructed with taste. The glass made here, though not so white as that made in Russia, is, nevertheless, strong and good, and some of it very handsomely cut. After visiting all the buildings, Colonel Sakalofsky, who was then at the head of the Factory, endeavoured to detain me all



day, but I resisted his polite invitation, and departed, in order to take advantage of the good roads. On stepping into my sledge I found it half loaded with bread, cold roasted turkeys, and game, which had been put there without my knowledge by the Colonel. Thus it is in Siberia: if you refuse their kindness, it will steal upon you, in some way or other, in spite of your best endeavours to avoid it. Oh! hospitality, blessed is the land of thy abode! Let other countries boast of the beauty and mildness of their climates, the delicacy of their fruits, and the luxuries of their tables—while the glory of Russia shall be the noble heat of hospitality, that pervades even the coldest and remotest parts of her empire, and is found in honest unadulterated simplicity from the hut of the peasant even unto the palace of the Emperor!

After leaving the factory, the roads being good, I made a rapid journey to Krasnoyesk, although distant one thousand versts from Irkutsk. When we got into its neighbourhood, we found the plains scarcely covered with snow; and in many places the ground was quite bare. The fact is, that the snow, even in the depth of winter, is so shallow, that the cattle may find



their food with great ease; and the spring is there of course very early.

This is the most abundant district of the province of Irkutsk for grain, cattle, horses, &c. Flour is sold here generally from fifteen to thirty kopeks the pood, according to the goodness of the crops; excellent beef for one and a half to two roubles, and other things in proportion. Fish and game are also in abundance. The neighbourhood is likewise famous for wild goats, the flesh of which is not inferior to venison. Indeed they are properly a sort of small deer, and the skins, which are very thickly covered with hair, furnish the peasants with excellent warm boots and pelisses for the winter.

On my last journey from Irkutsk to this place, in January 1828, the coldest winter that has been known in Siberia for many years, the spirit of wine thermometer fell to 37 degrees of Reaumur. Although we were in a close carriage, lined well with bear-skins, the frost was so intense we found it impossible to travel during the night. When we breathed our breath fell like sand to the ground, and the horses' nostrils became so clogged with their frozen breath, that the yemshiks were obliged to stop every quarter



of an hour to clean them. The drivers and Cossacks had their faces frozen; so that I was obliged to give over the idea of travelling by night until the weather got milder. This did not happen until we arrived at Krasnoyesk; and we then remained there four days, when the weather became a little more moderate, and suffered us to travel night and day.

I found the district of Innesseisk had been erected into a province, and Krasnoyesk had become its seat of government, where the polite and amiable Governor, Mr. Stepanof, gave me a most kind and hospitable reception. He recommended to me two soldiers, one a grenadier of the guards of the regiment of Moscow, and the other of the Semenofsky, who, having been allowed a certain time to go and see their friends in Siberia, from whom they had been absent eleven years, were now about to return to St. Petersburg, and not having the means of hiring a conveyance, were much at a loss how to act so as to arrive within the term of their billets of absence. As I was much pleased with their appearance, (being both men of upwards of six feet high, with fine manly open countenances,) I agreed to take them with me instead of Cossacks. Nothing could exceed the joy they experienced



when I consented; and they declared they would sacrifice their lives before any accident should happen to my wife or myself. They had travelled from Russia on foot, near five thousand versts, to see their relations. The elder of the two had a wife and two children. He related to me that when he returned to his family, his wife, who knew him immediately, was so frightened that she fell into a swoon; and it was nearly an hour before she recovered her senses. His parting with his wife and children again affected us exceedingly; but he seemed to bear it with firmness, and said, "God bless you, put your trust in God: I shall return to you." Both those men, but particularly the married one, were the most faithful, obedient, well-behaved men I ever saw, and proved of infinite service to me on the road, as I travelled not with the post-horses, but with those of the common peasants. This gives me an opportunity of expatiating again on the moral and religious character of the Siberians, as well as their intelligence, generosity, and hospitality. I found on the road, even amongst the peasants, a sympathy, a kindness and attention to the wants of my family and myself, and a disinterestedness, that I have nowhere else experienced. Many times it occurred



that we lodged in a house for the night, were furnished with bread, milk, cream, and a supper for four servants, and I had a difficulty to make the man of the house accept of a couple of roubles. The demand was fifty to seventy kopeks; and sometimes payment was refused altogether. I met a carrier who was conveying goods from Tumen to Tomsk, a distance of about one thousand five hundred versts for two and a half roubles per pood! On questioning him, how he could possibly afford to take merchandize at so cheap a rate, he said, "the people of my country are kind and hospitable. I live about Tomsk, so that I must return thither; and I get a man and horse found a whole day for fifteen kopeks." The grenadier also assured me that the only expense his journey on foot to see his family had cost him, was about twenty-five roubles; and those were spent between St. Petersburg and Ecatherineburg. "After getting fairly into Siberia," said he, "no one would ever receive a kopek from me for either food or lodging."

After we got into Russia, and began to suffer certain impositions which are put upon travellers on the great roads in every country, he would often exclaim, "God be with me and my



beloved Siberia ! There people have their consciences and their hearts in the right place !” What he said was just and true. It cost me three times the sum to go from Perm to St. Petersburg, that I had paid to come from Irkutsk to Perm, although the latter space is double the distance.\* In Russia, as in other countries, the people who live by the road-side make a business of it, and gain their livelihood by travellers; but in Siberia all their desire is to hire out their horses, and when that is accomplished, they think themselves bound to furnish all your other wants gratis; particularly the richer class of peasants, who may be said to be the nobles of that country. When we stopped at one of these houses, and I asked the host what we had to pay, he always replied, “ I do not know; I do not meddle with those matters; you are welcome to every thing, unless you think proper to make a little present to the woman, who has the care of those things.” I was invariably referred to the women, who by

\* However, this is only to be applied to the high roads. Even in Russia I have also found, the moment I got off the main roads, a generosity and hospitality amongst the peasants throughout, not to be equalled in any other country.



the-by, in every country are more kind, benevolent, and disinterested than the men, so that of course the entertainment always cost me a mere song. Indeed I have remarked, even amongst the savages with whom I have been, the women are always the kindest to strangers, and seem to possess much more sympathy for the unfortunate than the men. The people of Siberia throughout have a liveliness of character also, and a quickness superior to the Russians; and altogether they are a race of men so important to the physical as well as moral strength of the empire, that I trust His Imperial Majesty will not fail to adopt measures for obliging the local authorities to be more just and equitable in their treatment of them. When I say the local authorities, I mean the inferior civil officers; as the Governors General, and the Governors, are men well known for their integrity. There is need of some new arrangement to check the rapacity of those who serve under them. They have, however, amongst them (I mean the rich peasants) an abuse of long standing, that calls loudly for the interference of government. I allude to what is called by a Russian word signifying *by turns*, (in relation to hiring-out their horses,) but as these turns are almost



invariably usurped by the richer party, who have a number of horses, friends, and adherents, the poorer peasants are thrown out; for, as to the man who has but one or two horses, his turn rarely if ever is found to occur. The drivers also, being in the pay of the rich, bring all travellers to their houses,—when the gates of the court-yard are shut, and the other peasants dare not come in to offer their horses.\* A Ukase exists, prohibiting this conduct; but as those fellows who keep the monopoly in their hands pay well the captain *spravniks*, commissaries, and officers of the *Zemsky Soud* (officers belonging to the county courts), they continue this injustice with impunity. Many of the poor peasants complained to me that they were prevented in winter from gaining as much as would pay their taxes, by this species of exclusive pri-

\* Having once arrived at a rich peasant's house, I observed the gates were immediately shut, and the host, when questioned about horses, endeavoured to exact from us two kopeks a verst per horse dearer than we had as yet paid. I told him immediately that I was not ignorant of his reason for shutting the gates, and if he did not open them immediately, and admit the other peasants to bargain with us, I would write a petition against him. This threat alarmed him, he opened the gates, and we got horses at the old price.



vilege and unequal distribution of an advantage that all have a right to share. This abuse exists along the Lena in a degree, but more particularly in the western part of the government of Irkutsk, and in the provinces of Innesseisk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk. The carrying trade of Siberia is enormous, and although performed at an extremely moderate rate, provisions, hay, oats, &c. are so cheap that the carriers make large fortunes; more particularly when this trade is collected into the hands of a few. I am of opinion that the Kiacta trade itself, although it certainly ought not to be laid open to every class and description of merchant, is nevertheless too much confined; for it is only those of the first guild or class of merchants who are allowed to trade there. The privilege ought to be extended to the second guild, but no farther; and amongst this description there are many rich, respectable merchants, who are now obliged to pay for the protection and name of the first guild, should they wish to have any thing to do with the China trade. I know that all the merchants of the town of Irkutsk wished to send deputies to the Emperor, to solicit this extension of the privilege; but it was suppressed



by the weighty purses and the intrigues of the first guild.

The speaking of the interior commerce and carrying trade naturally brings to my mind the roads and inland communications, which in that country are yet very imperfect. One reason of this is, that the method of making and repairing roads there is very little understood; besides that the expense bears extremely heavy on the meagre population of that immense country. The management of the business is for the most part given to the *spravniki*, or other officers of the civil list, many of whom are drunkards, or men unworthy of such a trust: so that time, labour, and money, are oftentimes expended without producing any advantage or improvement. It would certainly prove much more efficacious and advantageous in every way, if the management of the making and repairing roads, canals, &c. were conceded to the officers of the corps of engineers—men who are not only of honour, but of education expressly fitting them for such a duty. These officers would take plans of the countries through which the roads are made, the height of the mountains, level of the waters, &c. and would not only lead



the roads through the most direct and best tracts, but likewise point out where water communications might be had, perhaps, at trifling expense; all which would produce the greatest advantages in such a country as Siberia. This course appears to me the more easy, as his Imperial Majesty has already in Russia an establishment of this kind, from whence young officers might be sent to Siberia, and render themselves highly useful.

The prosperity of every country, but more particularly such an immense country as Russia, depends so much upon the perfection of its inland communications and commerce, that too much attention cannot be paid to this truly important object. How many parts of the empire abound with grain to a superfluity, that remains locked up on the spot, for want of roads or canals to convey it to the parts less productive, where it would find a ready sale! The improvement of the inland navigation, and the correction of speculation and venality, would render Siberia and its inhabitants rich and happy; and it is needless to add how highly advantageous its prosperity must be to the crown.

From Krasnoyesk to Tomsk we pursued our



journey night and day, till we reached the latter place.\* All the country lying between these two places is famous for grain, cattle, and horses.

\* At Tomsk the nightingale is as common as in Germany, and, indeed, there are a number of other very fine singing birds in Siberia.



## CHAPTER XVII.

Situation of Tomsk—Its resources and society—Barabinsky Step—Mr. de Tschecherin—Resident tribe of Tartars—Tobolsk—Its situation, buildings, and population—Manufactories in the town and province—Saline lakes—Scarcity of timber—Society at Tobolsk—Tumen and its inhabitants—Koongour—Ecathe-rineburg—Manufactories—Fine Arts—Contiguous gold mine, &c.—Perm—Its temperature and resources—Mineral productions of Siberia—Arrival at the frontier of Russia—Concluding particulars and reflections.

TOMSK is 1500 versts from Irkutsk, and 4500 versts from St. Petersburg, being situated in N. lat.  $56^{\circ} 29' 6''$ , and E. long. from St. Petersburg  $54^{\circ} 50' 6''$ . It has nearly 2000 houses, and from 8 to 10,000 inhabitants. Here also there are work-houses for exiles, coarse-cloth, leather, and soap manufactories, barracks, public magazines, military and other hospitals, an orphan-house, a dispensary, &c. &c. There are



a number of handsome houses in Tomsk, but the town is irregularly built, except the part that occupies a hill overlooking the river Tom and the country round. The Tom, on the banks of which the town stands, is joined at no great distance off by the river Catounia; and the junction of these two streams forms the fine river Oba, that empties its waters into the frozen Ocean. These three rivers are all famous for an abundance of fine fish. Next to Krasnoyesk, Tomsk is the cheapest and most plentiful spot in Siberia.

We found in Tomsk a pleasant little society, which of course must not be compared with that of Irkutsk, but which is notwithstanding very well for Siberia. At all events it shows no inferiority in hospitality, at least, if we may judge by the kind attentions we received there.

Not long after quitting Tomsk, the traveller finds himself on the Barabinsky *Step*, erroneously so called, being in several parts well-wooded, and having a river and many beautiful lakes, besides excellent soil and good pastures. In very dry seasons the lakes become low, and the waters sometimes poisonous, so that numbers of cattle and horses have been lost through drinking of them. The horses on this *Step* are small



in appearance, resembling those of the Yakuts; but full of spirit and vigour; and there is no part of Siberia where one is conveyed with such swiftness as over Baraba. We made, whilst on it, from 265 to 280 versts in twenty-four hours, stopping twice a day, an hour and more each time. It was peopled in part during the reign of the Empress Catherine II. at the instigation of Mr. de Tchecherin, then Governor-General of Siberia, a sensible, enterprizing, and a persevering man, who performed many extraordinary things, and greatly improved that country during his administration. He prevailed with the Empress to let him have all the recruits of one levy, instead of enrolling them in the army; which plan enabled him immediately to people a portion of the Step; and in a short space of time villages were seen to start up, where but a few years previously there was scarcely the trace of a human footstep. There is a tribe of Tartars still living on this Step, called *Sugay*, who are famous for breeding the horses I have mentioned above, which are so hardy, spirited, and swift of foot. This is the horde from whom the Yakuts are supposed to have derived their origin; and, indeed, they resemble one another in every thing. Since I have touched on the



subject again, it may not be amiss to remark, that although the Russians give to each of the Siberian hordes distinct names (as do likewise the hordes themselves), yet the affinity of their language, customs, manners, dress, and religion, all plainly indicates them to have sprung from one and the same origin—namely, the Tartars. The exceptions to this similarity are the Tchooktchees, Karaikees, and Kamtchatdales. These last may, perhaps, be the aborigines of the countries they inhabit; but the Tchooktchees bear a striking resemblance to some of the well-looking tribes of North American savages; being generally of a good size, stout, and straight-built, and possessing cool deliberate courage, and a generous independent spirit. One would almost be induced to believe they have been transplanted from the opposite continent, the resemblance is so striking. I cannot help remarking also how much I was struck by the strong resemblance between the features of the Tongusees and those of the Mantchoo Tartars; their broad heads, high cheek-bones, small eyes, cut diagonally—are precisely the same. The Tongusees have also the red tinge mixed with the brown, so remarkable on the faces of the Mantchoo race.



The first place of importance after leaving Baraba is Tobolsk, the capital of the province of that name, and formerly the capital of Siberia. It is situated in North latitude,  $55^{\circ} 11' 14''$ , and in East longitude from St. Petersburg  $37^{\circ} 46' 14''$ , three thousand versts from Irkutsk, and the same distance from St. Petersburg. Next after Yakutsk, it is in winter the coldest place of all Siberia. A large portion of the town is built on a plain at the top of a hill commanding a fine view of the superb river Irtysh, and the country round for a great distance. The small river Tobol runs through the town to join the Irtysh, which latter falls into the great river Ob. Tobolsk is situated similarly with Nizhny Novogorod, and is surrounded by a most fertile country, which produces a great abundance of grain, and all the necessaries of life in great plenty. Vegetables of all kinds grow here in a remarkably fine state, as well as pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers, without the aid of hot-beds.

At the time of which I am speaking, which is some years back, the town was composed of nearly two thousand wooden houses, with fourteen or fifteen houses, thirteen churches, two cathedrals, and a convent, of brick. There are



here also work-houses, hospitals, magazines, manufactories, several charitable institutions, and public seminaries, &c.

In this province there are two paper manufactories (one at Touvinsk, the other at Tumen), and two manufactories of the red leather that has a strong smell of musk, and is so much esteemed in England for binding books. Books bound in this leather are preserved even in the hottest climate from worms.

At Tumen there is a manufactory of saltpetre, and one in every house of carpeting of a coarse cheap kind, that is sold all over Siberia. Common salt is produced in great quantities at the saline lakes on the southern frontiers of the province, where there is a brisk trade carried on with the Khirgis at Omsk and St. Peter and St. Paul.

The transportation of salt down the Irtysh occasions an immense destruction of timber, as the barques which convey the salt are broken up at Tobolsk; it being impossible to draw such unwieldy craft up against the stream. I have heard that already large timber begins to be scarce there: consequently it would be well to form some other plan for transporting the salt, before the timber is quite exhausted.



On the southern frontier of Tomsk there is also a commerce kept up with the Khirgis at Semipolansk, Bouchtarma, and Oustkamino-gorsk. Indeed, almost all the commerce of Kiacta with Russia passes through Tomsk; and they have also a commerce by means of the Boucharmians with China (in caravans) that will probably become important.

The town of Tobolsk had about thirty thousand inhabitants, the town and district fifty-seven thousand, and the whole province about four hundred and seventy thousand; but as it is fourteen years since this information was given me, the population must now be very much increased. The society of Tobolsk may fairly stand a competition with that of some of the best provincial towns of Russia. I have been twice there, and both times was overpowered with hospitality and those kind attentions which are always so highly gratifying to a stranger, and which no people under Heaven understand so well how to bestow as the Russians.

After leaving Tobolsk the traveller arrives at Tumen, already mentioned as being famous for its carpeting, but (I am sorry to add) having also the character of very depraved morals. Many of the peasants and others, on the



eastern road towards Tomsk and Irkutsk, assured me that they were the only bad people who travelled that road, and that they were always happy when they got rid of them. I mention this fact publicly, as the place in question is the only town in Siberia that has such a character; and I hope they will endeavour to retrieve it.

After leaving Tumen, the next place of consequence is Koongour, a considerable town, and famous for its leather. From thence we continued our journey to Ecatharineburg, situated in North latitude  $56^{\circ} 20' 30''$ , which is considered as belonging to the government of Perm, but is properly part of Siberia, for the natural geographical line between Russia and Siberia consists in the mountains of Oural, which extend from the Desert of Khirgis to the Frozen Ocean, dividing also Perm from Ecatharineburg. The town of Ecatherineburg is very prettily situated on the river Icet, being surrounded by a most plentiful country, and thus affording all the necessaries of life at a very cheap rate. It consists of upwards of two thousand houses, and about fourteen or fifteen thousand inhabitants. In this town there are several manufactories; such as one for cutting



marble, jasper, agate, porphyry, &c.; one for polishing and finishing; three for washing the sands\* impregnated with gold-dust collected at the town; five for coining, belonging to the mint; and three for different sorts of iron-work. All these are Government property. The private manufactories are—one for making paper, one for candles, and ten for preparing tallow for exportation. There are here also several mills.

Sculpture at this place has arrived at a considerable degree of perfection; and some of the imitations of antiques which I saw cut on Siberian onyxes, would have done honour to Italian artists. At about forty versts from Ecatharineburg there is a manufactory for the painting and varnishing of sheet-iron, which is formed into tables, tea-waiters, &c. Some of the paintings which I saw exhibited a good deal of taste and correctness, and the polish was very fine and durable. When we reflect that all those works are principally performed by peasants, many of whom have had no previous instruction, we cannot but admire the cleverness

\* One hundred poods of the sand yield about three poods of gold-dust.



and ingenuity of the Russians. The beautiful vases of agate, jasper, porphyry, and malachite, which adorn the Hermitage at St. Petersburg, and which are so justly admired for the elegance of their shape and execution, are all made at Ecatherineburg. All the machines for hollowing, forming, and polishing those vases, are worked by water, as well as those of the copper and iron manufactories.

There is also a gold mine in the neighbourhood, that is about one hundred and thirty feet deep, kept free from water by a steam-engine; but it is not rich. The gold is found in veins of quartz running through a hill of soft granite, but in small quantities; and one hundred poods of the quartz seldom yield more than eight zolotniks of gold—say an ounce troy weight. Its annual produce was formerly from fourteen to twenty-two poods; and, of late years, since it has been under the direction of a very clever and respectable Englishman, a Mr. Major, I have no doubt but it has become still more productive.\*

Near to Ecatherineburg there is also a very

\* I have heard lately that the sand has recently failed to produce as much gold as formerly; but there have been gold mines discovered, and in some parts blocks of native gold of ten to twenty pounds weight.



fine foundry for the casting and boring of cannon.

Finding the cold beginning to increase, I hastened to depart for Perm; but ere I arrived there the thermometer fell to thirty-three degrees, and the day after for a few hours, was as low as thirty-six, of Reaumur. When the cold is intense in Siberia it is generally very calm, though the atmosphere becomes loaded with a thick vapour-like fog, so very intense, that one cannot see distinctly more than eight or ten yards forward. Twenty-five degrees of frost are there, on account of the dryness of the air, infinitely less felt than twelve or fifteen degrees in Russia. At Kamtchatka likewise twelve to fifteen degrees are beyond measure piercing, because of the neighbourhood of the sea, and the general dampness of the atmosphere.

Perm is the coldest district in Russia; but is, notwithstanding, a fertile province, and extremely rich in mines, particularly of iron and copper; and it is there that the malachite, and those beautiful specimens of native red lead, have been mostly found.

There yet remains a vast deal to explore in the mineral regions of Siberia, particularly the oriental part, where there are very strong



natural indications. Siberia produces a very great variety of precious stones. The principal ones are the yellow and white topaz, amethysts, crystals of various sorts, aquamarines of different colours, hyacinths, sapphires, emeralds, a species of the ruby, garnets, &c; also onyx, jasper, agate, porphyry, and marble, in great abundance. There are also silver mines in Perm. The adamant, or load-stone, of strong attractive powers, is common there. Asbestos also is found in such quantities that gloves are made of it at Ecatherineburg, as curiosities to sell to travellers. When soiled, they are cleaned by putting them into a red hot fire, the most intense heat only serving to whiten, without in any degree consuming, this extraordinary fossil. We may say with truth, there is scarcely a mineral or fossil in nature that is not found in Siberia!

Having now passed the geographical boundary that divides Siberia from Russia, my travels and observations must soon be brought to a close; and I assure the reader that in my humble attempt to describe what I have seen and experienced, I have been governed by no partial motives whatever. On the contrary, I have laboured to represent every object faith-



fully as it has affected my senses. I am, however, conscious at the same time, that it requires an abler pen than mine to delineate adequately the sublime and majestic works of nature in the regions I have been describing, and to pourtray them to the imagination in all their simplicity, beauty, and grandeur. Siberia does not possess the climate of Italy, nor the luxurious productions of India; but she possesses a fertile soil, a climate much better than is generally believed, and natural resources of the highest value; and she presents to the traveller such a magnificent picture of natural objects, as is no where to be equalled except on the immense continent of America. There is no longer any doubt but the greater part of her territory is susceptible of high cultivation, having a strong fertile soil, covered with superb forests, and intersected by fine rivers, or watered by numerous lakes, many of which may fairly be called seas.

The race of men produced there are uncommonly tall, stout, and robust; certainly the best looking people I have ever seen, particularly those of the Western parts. My readers will now, I am sure, agree with me, that this country, hitherto considered the *Ultima Thule*, or the *finis mundi*, has been highly gifted by its Cre-



ator, and only wants population and improvement to render it the most valuable portion of his Imperial Majesty's dominions.

This immense country is divided into two Governments, under the direction of two Governors-General, one for Eastern and one for Western Siberia. Those two Governments are subdivided into four Governments, and three *oblasts*, or districts, each province having its governor, and each district its chief. Tobolsk and Tomsk form what is called Western Siberia; and Inneseisk, Irkutsk, Yakutsk, Ochotsk, and Kamtchatka compose Eastern Siberia. The Governor-General of Western Siberia resides at Omsk, and the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia at Irkutsk. Tobolsk, Tomsk, Inneseisk, and Irkutsk, are presided over by governors; but Yakutsk, Ochotsk, and Kamtchatka, are governed by *oblastnoe nachalniks*, or district chiefs, who are under the control of the governor of Irkutsk. Irkutsk is six thousand versts from St. Petersburg, and five hundred versts from Kiachta, the place on the frontiers of China, where the Russian and Chinese merchants trade together. There is an excellent, well-served post all the way from St. Petersburg to Yakutsk, and not an interval betwixt any two



stations exceeding fifty versts long, the most of them being from twenty to thirty versts, in a distance of eight thousand five hundred versts! From Yakutsk to Ochotsk, however, that is to say, upwards of a thousand versts, the stations are some of them from one hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty versts in relative distance, and travellers are obliged to have tents, and encamp every night by the way. This distance is invariably performed on horseback, and all baggage and merchandize conveyed in the same manner; on account of the steep mountains, marshes, rivers, and mountain torrents, which render the journeying both difficult and dangerous. The Government of Irkutsk is between six and seven thousand versts in length, and, in some parts, two thousand versts broad. Tomsk and Inneseisk together are about one thousand five hundred versts in breadth, and three thousand versts in length; and Tobolsk is almost as large as Tomsk.

Siberia is bounded on the east by the Straits of Behring, the Kamtchatka Sea, and the North Pacific Ocean; on the south by Mantchoo, Chinese Mongol and Calmuck Tartary, Boucharia, and Khirgis; on the west by the moun-



tains of Oural, which stretch from the deserts of Khirgis to the Frozen Ocean; and on the north by the Frozen Ocean.

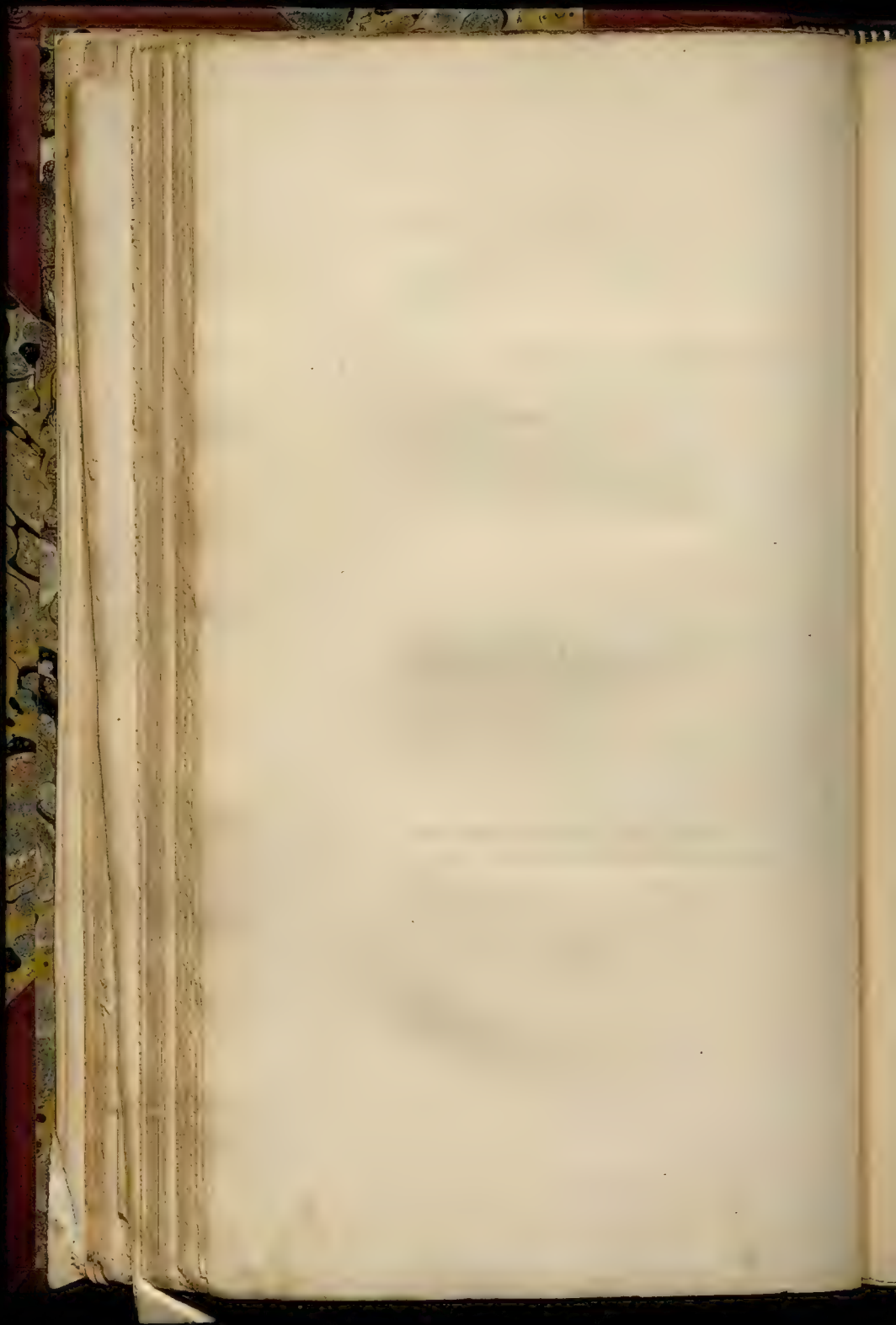
When we add to this enormous territory, Russia proper, we shall perceive that we are contemplating an empire truly colossal in every point of view; yet, though gigantic, it is well proportioned, and herculean in its strength. It is impossible for a true Christian to behold this without the deepest interest and admiration, and without feeling an inward religious satisfaction at seeing such a barrier placed between the civilized world and Mahomedanism. So truly Christian an empire, covering a sixth part of the habitable globe,—whose government is energetic, whose industry is flourishing, whose soil is prolific, whose resources are inexhaustible, whose people are brave and virtuous, and whose monarch is renowned for his wisdom, valour, and honour,—has a fair claim to be considered as among the mighty and impregnable bulwarks of religion and civilization.



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TRAVELS IN CHINA.







## TRAVELS IN CHINA.

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### CHAPTER I.

Aspect of the country to the eastward of Macao, near Pedro Branca—A Comprador and his party—Strange jargon of English used by the Chinese—Office and habits of a Comprador—Hoppoo boats and men—Exactions of the Mandarins—Macao Roads and Island—Grotto of Camoens—Islands near Macao—Bocco Tigris—Custom-house Officers—Tiger Island—Whampoa Roads—Boats called Sampons, managed by women—Samtchoo, a pernicious liquor—Communication of the women at Whampoa with the European ships.

WHEN I *first* visited China, I had not as yet seen any other part of Asia. It was in the month of August, in the year 1798, that our ship made the land to the eastward of Macao, near the famous rock of Pedro Branca (White Rock). The group of objects which now crowded upon my senses was altogether novel and interesting. Islands, hills, canals, and rivers,



adorned with a lively verdure, and thickly peopled, presented themselves alternately in rich perspective. Innumerable fleets of boats of various sizes and descriptions plied upon the waters, whilst the sun shone brightly to illumine a scene, the picturesque and singular beauty of which could not fail to inspire a stranger with the most pleasing sensations. The vegetation, some of the trees, and, indeed, the general appearance of the country, are totally different from those of any other region, and as remarkably monotonous as the inhabitants.

A fisherman came on board and offered his services as pilot into Macao Roads, but took care to inform us he could go no farther, lest the Mandarin should seize and flog him for acting as a pilot without a *chop*, or license. The dress and manners of our visitors, so opposite to every thing European, excited our astonishment. Shortly after came another visitor calling himself a *comprador*. The reader will find this man's business explained presently. He, and several servants who accompanied him, wishing to hire themselves, were dressed in long gowns of silk, and white and blue Nankin; but their appearance was so effeminate I could not help imagining myself surrounded by wo-



men. The construction of their boats, after the manner of the country, roused our curiosity, as did also the sails made of mats, and the oars spliced; whilst the rowers, instead of rowing together, rowed one after the other. They spoke to us in English, or rather a bad dialect of that language, the composition and pronunciation of which are so curious and difficult, that an Englishman must reside a year or two at Canton before he can speak it fluently. He is truly surprised to find his native tongue so corrupted in their mouths that he can scarcely understand it, yet is obliged to adopt their abominable jargon to make himself understood. None of the Chinese, either rich or poor, understand those who speak plain English to them.

The comprador proffered his services, and pulled a large pocket-book from under his petticoats, stuffed with recommendations from those whom he formerly served, which he presented for our perusal. Our captain engaged him as a ship-comprador, and one of his friends as a house or factory comprador. They were (as likewise the servants) prepared with whole bundles of recommendations. We must now inform the reader what are *compradors*, and the reason



why Europeans are obliged to employ them during their residence in China.

The name is evidently of Portuguese origin, and signifies the buyer, but is used indiscriminately by all nations who visit Canton. Compradors are of two descriptions, namely, those who furnish provisions to the ships, which are always moored in the roads at Whampoa, and those who supply them to the factories at Canton. They are generally connected in business; the one living at the town of Whampoa, near the shipping, the others at Canton. Those who have partners at Whampoa are preferred for factory-compradors, as they supply one better with beef. The beef sold generally at the Canton markets, being of the buffaloe, is much inferior to the beef of the common ox, and therefore not liked by Europeans. Besides, the buffaloe is a working animal, and is never killed until he is no longer fit for labour; and his flesh is, consequently, very hard and unpalatable. The rice-grounds in China, which are more than half the year covered with water, are ploughed by those invaluable animals, which may be fairly classed amongst the amphibious, for they live more in the water than on land, and even delight to eat the aquatic herbs and grass, which



can only be had by plunging their heads a considerable depth under water.

The compradors hold *chops*,\* or licenses, from the Hoppoo, or collector of the revenues of the port of Canton, to supply foreigners with provisions of every sort and description. These *honest* fellows serve you without wages, although they are obliged to pay the Mandarins a good *douceur* for the privilege; but they take especial care to remunerate themselves at your expense. They are also exposed to the exactions and frequent vexations of the petty mandarins; but they are themselves adepts in deception, and they manage to cheat both the Mandarins and the Europeans; and enrich themselves in spite of all the dangers and difficulties which apparently surround them. The captains, officers, and sailors, buy chiefly from the compradors; so that, as they keep shops both at Whampoa and Canton, they carry on an extensive trade. Their boats visit the ships with provisions, &c. &c. every morning between seven and eight o'clock, and are suffered to remain there until sun-set. A tide-waiter is appointed to examine those boats before they leave Whampoa.

\* *Pae* is the real Chinese name; *Chop* is an appellation given by Europeans.



He is, generally, in the confidence and pay of the compradors; and he finds it his interest to wink at an extensive contraband commerce. The easy conscience of this tide-waiter is a matter of no small consequence to the comprador, who, being thus enabled to smuggle boldly, in and out, his profits, of course, are very considerable.

There are two boats, called hoppoo boats, constantly fastened to the stern of every ship. In those boats are two custom-house officers, placed to prevent smuggling; but whose consciences being likewise easily satisfied, they spend most of their time in smoking, sleeping, and playing at cards. When any thing extraordinary is to be accomplished, they protect the comprador against the petty mandarins of other ships, who might interfere with him. Nothing can be more barefaced than the manner in which smuggling is conducted, in open day, at Whampoa. The hoppoo boats have also shops in them, where trifling necessities, fruits, &c. are sold; and, if great care is not taken, a bad intoxicating liquor, called samtchoo, is likewise sold to the sailors; and this is very injurious to their health.

It is said, the expences at Whampoa have become so heavy, in consequence of the increas-



ing exactions of the Mandarins, that no comprador will now consent to serve a ship without receiving 200 to 250 dollars fee. Small vessels arriving have been induced to employ the hoppoo men instead of a comprador, to save the fee; but, should the hoppoo men not pay the Mandarins regularly, this mode is dangerous, as the vessel runs the risk of having her supplies stopped altogether. As every thing, even to the smallest trifle, is sold in China by weight, and weighed by what is called a *tyching*, or steelyard, which is oftentimes false, the Chinese, who are exceedingly expert, will cheat strangers in spite of every precaution. The provisions are brought in baskets, and weighed in them, without allowing any tare for the baskets; yet the Chinese have been detected with stones stuck in the bottoms of them, to increase the weight. I have purposely digressed to explain the business of a comprador, as this information may prove useful to persons first visiting China.

The wind proving strong and favourable, we soon arrived at Macao roads, where we anchored at six to seven miles distance from the town. As is the custom, we sent an officer on shore, to pay his respects to the Portuguese Governor, and procure from the Macao Mandarin a pilot



to conduct us up the river to Whampoa. The fisherman who brought us through the Ladrone islands, demanded his pay, and made off as fast as possible, fearful, as before stated, of being seized and flogged for acting without a license.

Macao, a small island on the sea-coast, is called Omoon by the Chinese; but it has been so frequently described before, it would be useless to trouble my readers with a repetition. It is the retreat of all the foreigners in summer, who have no business to call them to Canton. Its situation is about ninety English miles to the southward and westward of that city; and it is well supplied with fish, fowls, fruits, and vegetables. One of the most romantic spots in the world is the *Caza de horta*, that overlooks the inner harbour of Macao, rendered famous for having a grot, where Camoëns, the celebrated Portuguese poet, composed his poem of the *Lusiad*. The garden has been much beautified by two British chiefs, Mr. Drummond and Mr. Roberts, who both took much pains to improve and embellish it. Mr. Drummond's energetic and liberal character, as well as improved and noble mind, joined to great urbanity of disposition, have left a strong impression in China; and in 1820, when I was there last, many of the Chinese spoke of him



with the highest esteem and respect. The unfortunate but amiable Mr. Roberts, a man also much beloved, was buried on the spot he had taken such care to improve.

After thirty-six hours delay, we received our chop, or license, to take a pilot to conduct us to Whampoa. I found, on inquiry, our vessel had got her license the more quickly, for having a cargo; but that vessels which brought only specie were detained much longer. Before our pilot took charge of the ship, he inquired very particularly whether there were any European women on board, as they were not allowed by the laws of China to pass the Bocco Tigris, or mouth of the river Tiger. I have heard, however, that when the Dutch first visited Canton, they were allowed to take their wives with them; but, in consequence of some dispute, which occurred on their account, the Chinese have never since permitted European females to go farther than Macao. Notwithstanding this, ladies go from Macao to a place called the second bar, several miles above the mouth of the river, in European boats, to meet the homeward-bound ships; it being both dangerous and inconvenient for passengers to row off to them when they are running out of the Macao roads.



We now had a fine favourable breeze, and, weighing our anchor, we proceeded up a large channel formed by groups of islands to the east and west, all of which, except those immediately in the neighbourhood of Macao, are verdant and interesting objects.\* Those about Macao are of a reddish soil; most of the summits, bare of verdure, presenting to the beholder an arid and unpromising appearance.

We were not long in arriving at the Bocco Tigris, a small strait at the entrance of the river, formed by islands to the east and west, on which are built four famous Chinese forts, if such Lilliputian fortifications deserve the name. These are represented, however, as the most formidable on the face of the globe, and capable of blowing to atoms any ship or ships which should dare to attempt to pass them, without permission from the Emperor's Mandarin at Macao.† Here of course we were obliged to

\* The islands about Macao are many of them composed of huge rocks of granite of a greyish colour and a fine grain. I observed the Chinese workmen procure large blocks and pillars of it by boring the rocks full of holes, which are afterwards filled with water, and in a few months they find them easy to split off.

† The brave Captain Maxwell gave those braggadocios a very good lesson.



anchor, whilst the pilot exhibited his *chop*, and obtained another passport to proceed to Wham-poa.

After about two hours' absence the pilot returned, and with him came two hoppoo-men, or custom-house officers, who fastened their boats to the stern of the ship, came on board, and strutted about the decks with great seeming importance. Although their outside garments were of silk, their caps adorned with red silk tassels, and fine blue sashes with clasps round their waists, their under clothing was as filthy as can be well imagined. Seeing them preparing to take up their abode in the cabin, and having been told it was not customary to permit them, after satisfying their demand for some rum, beef, and biscuit, I prevailed with the captain to send them into their boats. They are generally very impudent, and very regardless of the distinction between *meum* and *tuum*. Some of them have been known to put sily into their pockets chronometers and other valuables.

Having passed those mighty Chinese fortifications, and also Tyger Island, so called from its resemblance in form to that animal, we crossed the river, and coasted along the eastern



bank, almost all the way to Whampoa. The country on either side is flat, but not uninteresting, being chiefly composed of an immense extent of paddy, or rice-fields, which have been rescued from the river by embankments, and which immediately impress the beholder with the astonishing industry and perseverance of the inhabitants. A lively verdure was spread over them, whilst the embankments themselves exhibited long rows of peach and plantain trees, all covered with fruit. There are two sand banks or bars in this river, one called first, the other second bar, where very large ships, when heavily laden, are obliged to await the increase of the tide to pass over them; but smaller vessels can always cross them with the common tides, about high water. Here the pilots endeavour to impose upon the captain, if he be a stranger, by recommending more boats than are necessary to mark the way and tow the ship. Although the pilotage amounts to the sum of sixty Spanish dollars, the Mandarin at Macao and the head pilot, who holds the *chop* or license, take such a large portion, that the acting pilot gets a mere trifle. Robbed of the fruits of his honest endeavours, he is reduced to the necessity of cheating strangers for a livelihood.



He is generally a hardy, active fisherman, perfect master of his business, can put a ship about in very good style, and knows the names of all the ropes, and the words of command in the English language. Clothed badly, and eating the coarsest fare, he performs the severe duties of his service, whilst his lordly master struts about in silks, and lives like a gentleman.

After passing the bars, we soon found ourselves in Whampoa-roads, where we moored safely between Danes and French Islands on the west, and Whampoa Island on the east. Immediately on our arrival, we were surrounded by an immense number of small boats called sampans, most of them conducted by women, who were importunate and vociferous beyond measure in demanding the foul linen of the captain, officers, and sailors, to be washed. Sailors generally employ these women, and pay them only one dollar per man for washing their clothes, during their stay, that is, never less than two, and sometimes three or four months; but it is understood, at the same time, that they are to have any surplus beef and biscuit, or other things which Jack may have. These women require to be strictly watched, as they not only encourage sailors to steal, but likewise furnish



them with the pernicious liquor before mentioned, called samtchoo, which certainly often proves fatal to European sailors. Dysenteries and intermittent fevers, both difficult to cure in that climate, result from the samtchoo, and too free a use of fruits on first arriving. In the south-west monsoon, exposure to the sun, dews, and night air, proves also fatal to Europeans. Both ships and boats, therefore, should be well covered with awnings, a generous portion of good wholesome spirit allowed to sailors, and no permission given them to sleep upon deck, even in the hottest weather. Formerly, all the liquor distilled at Canton was extremely bad; but now, good rum may be purchased there cheap, from a Chinese, who formerly lived in Penang, and having returned to his native country, set up a distillery of rum.

Some years ago, none but washerwomen were allowed to visit the ships, but now all sorts are permitted, and an unrestrained intercourse is as common at Whampoa as at London or Portsmouth. Certain boats, having licenses from the Mandarins, visit the ships as soon as it is dark, literally loaded with women. Many of these, as well as the washerwomen, speak English, Hindostanee, and Portuguese. Most of those



brought at night are poor girls, whom the extreme destitution of their parents has obliged them to sell for a certain term of years; and they are slaves until that time expires. Whatever they can earn belongs to their master; he disposes of them as he pleases, oftentimes beats them, and clothes and feeds them badly. The custom of buying and selling children for a term of years is very common, and is the only species of slavery allowed in China. Some of the boat-women at Canton, Whampoa, and Macao are straight and well formed, with agreeable features, without being handsome; and they are almost always of a lively disposition, not having the disgusting small foot so much admired in the higher classes.



## CHAPTER II.

Whampoa—Charming aspect of the neighbourhood—Chinese regulations for the intercourse with foreign vessels—Venality of the native agents—Avarice the favourite passion of the Chinese—Prevalence of smuggling—Extensive illegal traffic in opium—Safe transport of property by the smuggling boats—How to overcome the incivility of a Civil Officer—Conduct requisite to be adopted in the intercourse with the Chinese—Junk River—Salt River—Apo-Tsy, Admiral of the Pirates—Commerce of China—Navigation—Chinese Colonists—Construction and working of the Junks—Crowd of vessels in the vicinity of Canton—Dutch forts—Arrival at Canton—Course to be pursued by commercial strangers—Hong Merchants—Remarks on the commercial relations of China—The Tea-trade.

ON arriving at Whampoa, the stranger cannot fail to be both surprised and pleased with the variety of agreeable objects which present themselves on all sides. Romantic islands, highly cultivated and beautifully verdant, luxuriant rice and sugar fields, villages and pagodas,



an immense number of boats of various sizes and descriptions, added to a very large fleet of ships from all quarters of the globe, swimming on the surface of a majestic river, afford at a single *coup d'œil*, one of the richest and most diversified prospects in the power of imagination to create.

It now became necessary to proceed to Canton. In a country where the Government is so jealous and arbitrary, any privilege allowed to foreigners naturally excites our surprise. But, when we come to learn the extreme venality of the local authorities, and the benefits they reap by this condescension, we wonder no longer at their complaisance. According to old custom, as the Chinese say, the captains have possessed the right of going between Canton and Whampoa, in their own boats, without examination or molestation from the chop-houses, or custom-house stations, and merely with this stipulation, that the flag of the nation she belonged to should be hoisted on the boat, to signify that the captain himself was on board. The hoppo-man, or custom-house officer at the ship, furnishes him with a pass, expressive of what the boat contains, the number of the crew, &c. to be delivered, on his arrival at Canton, to the



water-mandarin or tide-waiter, who examines the boat. It was also stipulated, that nothing should be sent in those boats but articles necessary for the captain's own use and consumption, all sort of merchandise subject to duty being strictly prohibited. Boats now pass up and down, with the flag; but it is never asked whether the captain is there or not. This arrangement produces a good revenue to the Mandarins; but it is certainly, at the same time, a real convenience and an indulgence to strangers, who, instead of being plundered at the several stations or chop-houses, have only two Mandarins to pay, namely the hoppoo-man at the ship, and the water-mandarin or tide-waiter, at Canton.

Any one who has ever passed from Canton to Whampoa, in a boat of the country, can attest the delay, vexation, and exactions practised at the several chop-houses. A small bundle of clothes cannot be taken without being examined at every station; and if the boatman does not bribe the Mandarins, he is maltreated, and detained double the ordinary time. The poor fellow, therefore, never fails to bribe, if he is able, looking for re-imbursement from the stranger, who is charged a price in proportion.



This has increased very much within twenty-five years past, when it never cost more than one Spanish dollar to go to Whampoa; but now a boat cannot be had for less than three dollars; and sometimes you are obliged to pay five, for going the small distance of twelve miles.

At the *chop-houses* there are Mandarins of low rank, placed to prevent smuggling; but those worthy officers of the Customs rather encourage it, and make collections for themselves, instead of the Imperial treasury. The reader will observe, however, that the exactions I have noticed are so managed as to fall entirely upon the foreigners. I have no doubt, but the introduction of the European commerce into China, as the Chinese themselves declare, has increased their venality. However, from the subtle manner in which it is managed, I feel convinced also that corruption is a vice of very old date in China. They also pretend to say, that those abuses which actually exist were not known before the Tartar Conquest. This is going much too far back for us to attempt to dispute, further than to say, that, if we are to judge by the morals, habits, and customs, of the present age, it cannot be true. The Custom-house



Mandarins of Canton have got completely the advantage of their brethren in iniquity at Whampoa. European boats are allowed to take to Canton, for the use of the factories, clothes, furniture, plate, glass-ware, wines, to a certain quantity, and articles of food likewise, but no merchandize. Foreign merchandize pays a heavy duty, and as it forms an important part of the revenue of the crown, a more strict watch is kept upon European boats going from the ships to Canton. As they are supposed to return empty, less regard is paid to them from Canton to Whampoa, and Europeans take advantage of it to bribe the Custom-house officers, to export gold, silver, zinc, and indeed all sorts of merchandize that occupies little room. We must, however, blame the Government for the venality of the people, because there are so many prohibitions and enormous duties to tempt the favourite passion of the Chinese, *avarice*, that a vast number of people engage in the contraband trade, as being the most profitable. Moderate duties and freedom of importation would destroy the temptation, and consequently render smuggling dangerous and unprofitable. At present it has become an organised system of plunder that is protected by the Mandarins



themselves, and, consequently, succeeds to admiration.

The opium trade, with the exception of ten chests of that pernicious drug, that were allowed to be imported into Macao, for medicinal purposes, is entirely conducted by smugglers. In defiance of an annual edict from the Emperor, making it death to smuggle opium, the enormous quantity of nearly *four thousand chests* is imported every year to Macao and Whampoa; the greater part, however, goes to the former place. When I inform my readers, that each chest weighs a *pecul*,\* that is to say, one hundred and thirty-three and one-third English pounds (about three and three-quarter poods Russian weight), and that it sells for twelve to fifteen hundred, and sometimes two thousand Spanish dollars per chest, they may form some judgment of the value and extent of smuggling in China. It is a business that all the inferior Mandarins, and some of the higher ones, their protectors, are engaged in, so that opium is carried through the streets of Macao in the most bare-faced manner, in the open day. The opium dealers at Whampoa formerly took it

\* A Malay name for a Chinese weight.



away by night; but, latterly, I have seen them go to the ship with the linguist of the Whampoa custom-house officer, and take it out in the day-time. Sixty Spanish dollars is the bribe paid for each chest of opium sold at Macao; and, if it goes to Canton, it pays sixty more on its arrival there. Large boats armed, having from thirty to forty men, and called opium boats, ply between Macao and Canton, when that market offers an advantage in price. These boats carry this drug, and are sanctioned by the custom-house officers, who, of course, receive for this business, likewise, a good bribe.

I have known many persons send large sums of specie by those boats to Macao, at a moderate rate, and I never heard of an accident happening to them in any way. The last time I left Canton, I could find no European ship about to sail at the moment I wished to depart, and was, therefore, obliged to have recourse to the smugglers. A rich smuggler came to the factory, took all my trunks, which amounted to seven or eight, gave me a receipt for them, and desired me to be at Whampoa at two o'clock the following day, in a European boat, at a spot that he marked out to meet me. I went at the hour appointed, and found a fine large boat well-



armed, rowed by twenty-six men, that conveyed me safely to Macao in eleven hours. What astonished me the most was, that, on our arrival, he went directly to the *chop-house*, where he remained about five minutes, and then returning, told me I might go on shore; and, on his ordering his men to carry my trunks, they took them immediately to my lodgings without the smallest interruption. A friend of mine, whose family was at Macao, accompanied me, and we paid twenty dollars each for our passage (say two hundred roubles), certainly not dear for being conveyed so safely and expeditiously with our property, the regular duties on which would have amounted to four hundred dollars at least.

All metals are prohibited from being exported except zinc, and the quantity of that metal is always regulated by the *hoppoo*, or collector, every season. There are, however, immense quantities smuggled into the English East India cotton-ships, whenever they wish to buy more than the portion allowed by government. It has, however, sometimes occurred, that a rigid *foo-youne*, or civil governor, has been appointed at Canton, who, on his arrival has persecuted severely the dealers in opium, breaking up their shops and confiscating their property—for their



persons are seldom to be had, they being always on the alert to make their escape. This extreme rigour does not last longer than a month or two, his *foo-yune-ship's* virtue seldom proving of that inexorable cast which is inaccessible to the charms of gold. During my residence, however, a *foo-yune* arrived, who proved incorruptible; and he almost destroyed the smugglers, as well as the profits of his colleagues, which latter, becoming tired of his persecutions, united together, and, by their intrigues had him advanced to a much higher station. Being a man of talents, he got another step again in a short time, and, at length, came back to Canton as *Tsan-Tuk*, or viceroy. The opium-dealers and smugglers were greatly alarmed, shut up their shops, and secreted themselves for some time. It appeared their fears were groundless. This artful man, who formerly persecuted them from political motives, to insure his advancement, was now as mild and propitious as possible. Having arrived at an elevated station, with the certainty of rising still higher, he sought to enrich himself in order to be the more sure of gratifying his ambition. Accordingly, he proved kind to his colleagues, and polite to Europeans; and, by his affability of deportment, contrived to



amass the largest fortune that ever fell to the share of a Viceroy of Canton. He was afterwards made a member of the Emperor's council at Pekin.\* I had the honour of dining in his company, at a dinner Mr. Drummond gave to him, on board one of the English East India-men; he was the only Viceroy I ever knew accept of an entertainment from Europeans.

Cunning and intrigue are, in China, employed more than in any other country of the globe; and the reason is plain: the nature of the government, and the customs and habits of the country, render them necessary.

I have shown that on arriving at Whampoa, a captain has only to obtain a pass from the custom-house officer at the ship, hoist his flag upon his boat, and proceed to Canton without interruption. It would be advisable, notwithstanding, to pay the Mandarin a visit at the Whampoa *chop-house*, the first time he goes up. This is an act of politeness that will conciliate his favour, and facilitate his intercourse with him afterwards, should he have occasion for his services. In a country where every fa-

\* His name was *Pack-Thai-Yen*, called also *Pe-Ta-Zhin*. He was made a Calao, but afterwards displaced.



vour is purchased, generous, honourable conduct has but little weight; indeed, it lays a man open to the arts of wicked men. An honest man, then, must be prudent; and, if he cannot stoop to bribery, he must, at least, shut his eyes against what passes before him, and endeavour not to offend the pride of those who have the power of injuring him.

On the passage from Whampoa to Canton, the town of Whampoa and its pagoda, as well as first and second pagodas, are all striking objects. Several populous villages, large bodies of rice and sugar fields, and every where a cultivated country, afford a picture of industry and improvement highly interesting. There is another passage up, called Junk-river, at the back of Whampoa, the entrance to which is below the roads, on the eastern side, where all the Chinese junks, of large burthen, pass to go to Canton. After arriving at the head of Junk-river, they cross over to the western side, and enter what is called by Europeans Salt river, the place where all the Chinese vessels loaded with that important article are obliged to anchor, near to the salt chop-houses. A large portion of the salt imported into Canton is brought from an island on the west coast, called *Hai*



*Nan.* This trade, as well as the foreign trade, is held by a company of monopolists, called by Europeans *Hong Merchants*. Those of the salt company are richer and more respectable, being men of very large capitals, and have honorary ranks as Mandarins. It being a productive commerce to the crown, it is consequently strictly watched by the monopolists, who are, notwithstanding, often cheated by the petty Mandarins. All dealers in salt are obliged to take out licenses, and any one found selling otherwise is punished severely.

During the time the pirates infested the coasts, numbers of salt junks were intercepted by them, and salt rose to an extravagant price. At length, the Company were obliged to negotiate with the admiral of the pirates, and paid a certain sum for every vessel that he furnished with a passport.

After a while, the captains and crews of the salt-junks became leagued with the pirates, and used to convey to them, clandestinely, provisions, stores, ammunition, &c. The Government detected the connivance, and laid an embargo, of a sudden, upon the returning salt-junks. The pirate admiral, finding his supplies cut off, invaded the country about the inner



passage leading to Macao, where he cut all the ripe rice, and carried it off, as well as a great number of women, whom he presented to his followers. His name was Apo-Tsy, a very formidable robber, who had an immense fleet of junks, and upwards of twenty thousand men under his command. He at length became so daring that he intercepted the boats carrying cargoes to the ships at Whampoa, and committed depredations on land within eighteen miles of Canton. The Viceroy became alarmed, for he had no army to oppose him, and was forced to employ an English armed country-ship to drive him out of the river. Many naval engagements took place between the Chinese war-ships and the pirates; but the latter invariably obtained the victory. The Portuguese at Macao were also called upon, or rather were told their offer would be accepted, to fit out ships against the pirates, and a sum of money would be granted to them by the Canton Government. However, very little good resulted in the way of fighting; but the Portuguese rendered the Viceroy an essential service in the way of negotiation, as mediators between him and the pirates. Apo-Tsy positively refused to listen to the Viceroy's promise of an amnesty,



should the pirates return to their allegiance, without the Macao Government's becoming security for the faithful performance of the contract. The Macao Government, therefore, came forward and pledged itself to the admiral, who immediately submitted with all his followers. He was made Governor of the province of Fokien, and his followers were all pardoned. During their wars with the Chinese the pirates took a fleet commanded by a Thai-Tuk, or Admiral, who was uncle to the present Emperor. Apo-Tsy had some dislike to the Chinese Admiral; and, when he took him, ordered him to be beheaded. The present Emperor (Tao-Kuang), on coming to the throne, sent the Governor of Fokien a polite message to say, that the laws of China required blood for blood, and he therefore sent for his head instead of his uncle's. There was no excuse to be made, and Apo-Tsy's head was conveyed to Peking.

The Chinese have an extensive foreign commerce carried on by their own junks to Japan, Cochin China, Siam, Tonquin, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Macassar, and, indeed, to all the Indo-Chinese islands. The Chinese declare that this trade is the most important of any of their external relations; and we may believe them



when there are said to be upwards of forty thousand tons of shipping occupied with that and the salt trade. We know also that a Chinese junk bound to the islands carries a cargo of from three to five hundred thousand dollars' value in China-ware, silks, nankins, ready-made clothes, books, writing-paper, ironmongery, tea, instruments of husbandry, iron, cloth, &c. &c.

The Chinese know nothing of the theory of navigation; but they are smart active sailors. They generally get a Portuguese pilot from Macao, who can take an altitude of the sun, to conduct them. They make however but one voyage in a year, going off with the north-east monsoon, and returning with the south-west monsoon. On all the Indo-Chinese islands, as well as in many parts of India, there are a large quantity of Chinese emigrants. They are certainly invaluable colonists, as they have sufficiently proved wherever they are established. The working of the mines of tin and gold, planting of cotton, and making of indigo, sugar, &c. in the Malay islands, is all performed chiefly by the Chinese. Amongst the slothful and careless Malays they soon acquire fortunes. A most singular fact is, that although they intermarry with the Malays, they never adopt their



habits or religion, but always remain, as well as their descendants, a distinct race; and wherever you find them settled, you will see a complete miniature picture of China. At Japan they are more strictly watched, their trade being restricted to a certain number of vessels; and, whilst there, they are obliged to live in a certain place, set apart for them at Nangasaky. Chinese colonists now swarm throughout India likewise, and the English Government very wisely gives them every encouragement.

The Chinese junks are very awkwardly constructed, from the size of one hundred to the enormous bulk of one thousand five hundred tons, and divided into many compartments, all water-tight, so that a leak in one part of the vessel should not affect the rest. They have sometimes two, sometimes one mast, and that of an enormous size, without stays or shrouds. Their sails are of mats; the yards of bamboo, which are both light and strong.\* One of these enormously large masts is raised and stepped in its place, by building a square frame of bamboo,

\* When they wish to reduce the sail they let it run down the mast, and take it up upon deck, according to the strength of the wind—a very convenient mode of taking reefs.



five to six stories high, on the deck, open at one side, and immediately over the hole. The butt end of the mast is then trained in upon the vessel, and is raised and suspended over its bed with Spanish windlasses, there being a windlass upon every story. After being suspended perpendicularly, it is then lowered gradually into the step, in the safest and easiest manner one can conceive. Their anchors are made of wood that is very hard and heavy, having but one fluke, close by which the stock traverses the shank, and not, as in a European anchor, near the ring. Although their anchors appear awkward to a European, they, nevertheless, hold a vessel very well with a long scope of cable, the stock being in an opposite direction to the fluke, so as to keep it to the ground. I have seen a junk in the Macao roads ride out safely a gale of wind, when the Portuguese ships were driven from their moorings. One of those huge junks arriving from Batavia is a curious sight, crowded with men, monkeys, parrots, Java sparrows, and various other birds and animals, and might be said to be a good representation of Noah's ark, were it not for the over-proportion of the human species. The owner or owners of the junks employ but a small part for their own use, the



remainder being let out on freight and to passengers. Freighters generally accompany the property themselves; so that, with the passengers and crew, an immense crowd is collected, the greater part of which is destined to remain at the islands, where they seek their fortunes as mechanics, working in the mines, manufacturing sugar, and in agricultural employments. During the last war many of the British Indiamen, who were badly manned, took Chinese to complete their crews on returning home, and the captains said they were smart, active seamen, though rather timid about going aloft in bad weather.

The reader must excuse this digression on the subject of Chinese foreign commerce, as many have asserted China to be a country wholly agricultural and manufacturing, while real experience proves the contrary. After giving this imperfect account of it, which might have been extended to a volume, and given more in detail, no one will, I think, believe that the Chinese are locked up at home. It may indeed be safely asserted, that they are one of the most commercial nations of the globe.

Having passed Salt River, a busy and a crowded scene presents itself to the admiring



eye on every side. Junks of all sizes, boats of every size, shape, and description, which come to Canton from the other provinces, and swarms of sampans, literally conceal the face of the waters. Sampans are the smaller class of boats, having a bamboo covering. The stern is furnished with a long scull spliced at about one third of the length from the blade, and the upper splice resting upon an iron pivot; with this scull and an oar or two at the bows, they are impelled through the water with considerable velocity. At the first glance, one imagines it almost impossible to find a passage through this labyrinth of vessels, apparently jumbled together without leaving a road to pass through them. There is, however, a good passage always left free, on the western shore, and another, not quite so clear, on the eastern side, the boats being all moored in rows, leaving vacancies between them like streets, where the sellers of meat, fish, fruits, vegetables, &c. keep their course, crying the commodities they have to sell.

In passing through this fleet, the forts, or Dutch Follies, as they are called, are two pleasing objects. I could never learn why they obtained that name. Some say the Dutch once brought thither cannon in hogsheads, which they



attempted to mount on the batteries, but the Chinese detected them by one of the casks breaking as they were rolling them into the fort. The Government drove them away, and has never since allowed any Europeans to have a settled residence at Canton. Others assert this to be a fiction; and that no such circumstance ever occurred between the Dutch and Chinese. It appeared to me, that the Dutch were much liked by the Chinese, and treated by them in a friendly manner. The Dutch factory at Macao was eighteen years without receiving any ships from Europe, yet the supercargoes were permitted to visit Canton every season, and were always treated with the same respect and attention.

On arriving at Canton, the landing place is generally opposite the old Swedish factory, near to a *chop-house*, where there is a Water-Mandarin always ready to examine the trunks, &c. which are brought up in the boat. Should you have any thing in them you do not wish to be seen, you have only to give your comprador notice of it. He puts a little fee into the Mandarin's hand, who passes his fingers lightly over the trunks, after they are opened, and suffers them to be carried to the factories, without looking deeper than the surface. But should you



neglect this precaution, he will certainly examine every article, and rummage them to the bottom. Those who do not wish to hire factories, may be well accommodated in a hotel kept by an American, at the old Danish Hong, or factory.

The first thing after a stranger arrives in Canton, if he be a commercial man, is to *secure* his ship, as it is called; that is, to find one of the company of Hong Merchants who will transact his business, furnish him a cargo, and be responsible for him during his stay. This done, his security merchant recommends to him a linguist, an important person, who is absolutely necessary; and it is always best to receive whom the merchant recommends, that there may be no disagreement between them.

The Hong Merchants are a company of monopolists, like the Salt Merchants, appointed by the Government to manage the European trade, and are held responsible for the duties on the imports and exports of the ships they secure. They are not only responsible for all the legal and regular duties, but likewise are obliged to pay all the fines and penalties which may be incurred by the Europeans under their care, in case of illicit commerce, disputes, accidents, &c.



&c. They amount, by law, to thirteen members, but oftentimes are only eleven, in consequence of failures, &c. Some seek the situation themselves; whilst others have been very rich shopkeepers, and, having been detected in smuggling, have paid a large sum to the Mandarins, and become Hong Merchants to avoid further persecution. It will be readily perceived that a Hong Merchant holds a place of high responsibility. This sufficiently illustrates the deep and cunning policy of the Chinese Government, who wish to avoid, in every instance, the slightest chance of a dispute with foreigners.\* Although these merchants hold also honorary titles and buttons, they cannot defend them from the wrath of their haughty master the hoppoo, or collector of the customs at Canton. Every principle of feeling, honour, and sentiment is debased before his tribunal, where, if they are called in anger, they must

\* The Chinese Government despises, and pretends to know nothing of the powers of Europe, in a national point of view, and their subjects are considered merely as commercial adventurers, who are only suffered to trade under the license, protection, and responsibility of the Hong or company of Chinese merchants appointed for that purpose. This company is thus the cat's-paw to pull the nuts out of the fire.



present themselves on their knees knocking their foreheads six, nine, or twelve times against the ground, before they are noticed and permitted to change their posture. And when they rise, they dare not lift their eyes higher than the level of the fifth button on the Mandarin's breast! It is an unpardonable affront, (or only atoned for by some strokes of the bamboo,) should they chance to look him in the face. It would appear that the old proverb, "A cat may look at a king," has no parallel in China!

Any one called before a judge to give his evidence, or otherwise, is also obliged to knock his head at least three times to the ground, and is not suffered to speak, except in answer to the interrogatories which are put to him. Two men with bamboos stand near to punish him who infringes this rule.\* The poorer class of Hong Merchants avoid, as much as possible, private interviews with the hoppoo, fearful of

\* When they wish to swear a witness, a live cock and a knife are presented to him, and he is obliged to cut off the cock's head at the moment he takes the oath. Indeed the cutting off the cock's head is considered in the same light as we do kissing the Bible; though I doubt much if it be really held equally sacred in a country where morals are so debased.



what they call squeezing, that is, being humiliated until they make him a handsome present. However, the Chinese generally consider knocking their heads to the earth before the Mandarins, not as a humiliation, but a ceremony to show their respect for the Emperor, in the persons who represent him. The whole company of Hong Merchants, although honorary Mandarins, when called before any of the local authorities, are obliged to go through this ceremony.

This Company has lost much of its respectability and wealth since the death of the famous chief, Pwan-Kae-Kwa, who was a very clever man appointed by the Emperor, and by his influence and riches kept up the credit of all its members, as well as prevented them from engaging in ruinous speculations. There are, however, certain abuses which tend to injure the company, namely smuggling, and a practice the poorer members have of selling their licenses to shopkeepers, to export teas, &c. because the shopkeepers pay them the duties in ready money, for which the government allows them twelve months credit.

Whenever I have asked the Chinese whether



the revenues on the European trade were of great importance to the Imperial Treasury, they have always declared they consider their own commerce with the Indo-Chinese islands as infinitely superior in every respect. However, the amount of the importations into Canton, from England, America, Holland, France, Sweden, Denmark, Manilla, and India, in European ships, in money and merchandise, must annually amount to from thirty to forty millions of dollars, at least. A bad policy of the Chinese Government, in prohibiting opium, the use of which is almost as common in China as tobacco in other countries, makes the Emperor lose the duties annually of four to five millions of dollars. The importance of our trade to China, however, does not result from our importations into the celestial Empire, but from the quantity and value of her productions and manufactures, which we take away and consume in Europe.

What an immense number of hands are employed in preparing the single article of tea, not only in the cultivation, but the packing, transportation, &c. ! Making a tea-box employs a carpenter, a plumber, a blacksmith, a paper-maker, a person who pastes the paper and



chunams \* it, another who ties the box with rattans, and the coolies or labourers, who pack, carry it, &c. &c.

Deprive China of the English trade alone, and some millions of inhabitants would be thrown out of employ and starve, or perhaps revolt against their Government. It certainly would be a serious inconvenience to England; † yet there is little doubt but the Chinese would feel still more at having an overstock of nearly thirty millions of pounds of tea on their hands, and the people who were occupied in preparing it all left without the means of a livelihood. For this reason the Chinese, although very imperti-

\* Chunam is composed of blood and lime, and makes a very strong cement. The paper, put on with it, and then oiled, will not admit water.

† If ever the British Government shall be so unwise as to deprive the Company of their monopoly, and render the trade free, the question of its importance will very soon be put to the trial; for I am persuaded it will not continue two seasons without coming to a serious rupture. I do not wish to enter into the spirit of a controversy about to take place on this subject; but, if I did, it would not be difficult to produce many strong and substantial reasons in favour of the monopoly, which persons who view those matters at a distance, and are unacquainted with the Chinese, cannot have an opportunity of knowing.



nent in their quarrels with the British, take care never to go to the last extremity. They feel their way, and when they get near the precipice, they stop suddenly, and return by the road from whence they came. We may safely conclude our trade has become quite as necessary to the Chinese as it is to us, in spite of the quantity of iron, lead, and cloth, which they consume, to say the least; and my opinion is, that it is much more important to them than they are inclined to confess.



## CHAPTER III.

Nature of the Chinese commercial policy—Exactions usually practised—Visits of the Hoppoo—List of the official Mandarins composing the Government of Canton—Power of the Viceroy—His Council—Penal code, and its effects—Illustrative Anecdotes—General venality—Punishment of Debtors—Monetary system—Want of commercial facilities.

THE policy of the Chinese Government, as it regards their commercial relations and regulations with foreigners, shows a great deal of deep cunning; but it is repulsive to wisdom and good policy, and by no means calculated to afford them all the advantages they might derive from their intercourse with us.

As soon as a European vessel drops her anchor at Whampoa, her Hong-Merchant is answerable to the Hoppoo for a cumsha, or present, of four thousand five hundred dollars; this sum the captain or supercargo of the ship is obliged to pay to the Hong-Merchant. In addition to this heavy charge, the ship has to pay



a fee of two hundred piastres to the linguist, as much to the *comprador*, and some smaller fees to the Water-Mandarins, at Canton and Whampoa. These are enormous port-rates (if such they can be called), and we may fairly estimate the expenses of every large ship that enters Canton at from six to ten thousand dollars, should she remain there, as is customary, between two and three months. I should also have mentioned the measurement money; as it is the duty of the Hoppoo to go to Whampoa, measure every ship, and pay the measurement money into the Imperial treasury, before she can be allowed to take in her cargo.

This measurement is managed in a very irregular and unjust manner, and amounts nearly to the same sum for a small ship as it does for a large one. It is, however, the only fee of all I have mentioned that is paid to the Crown! the rest are all exactions of the local authorities.

When the Hoppoo visits Whampoa, he is conveyed in a very large covered boat richly ornamented, and bearing the insignia and flags of his office, surrounded by war-boats, and is accompanied by several petty Mandarins and all the Hong-Merchants, in their own boats. There is a large ladder, or rather, a temporary pair



of stairs covered with red cloth, placed against the side of the ship he is to measure. He is saluted with nine guns when he comes alongside, and the same number on going away. In return for the enormous present before mentioned, his Excellency gives to the crew of the ship a few jars of vile samthoo, not drinkable, and two miserable bullocks, not eatable, which the captain generally exchanges with the *comprador* for a few pounds of good beef.

The Hoppoo does not always perform this duty himself, unless enticed by the importation of some elegant clocks and watches, fine cloths, or furs, or rich Dutch camblets. From these he takes whatever suits his fancy, and no matter to what amount,—the Hong-Merchants are obliged to pay for it. Europeans who bring expensive articles for sale are happy to see him, as they are sure of selling them at their own prices; for what he chuses must be purchased without hesitation. On ordinary occasions the Hoppoo sends his secretary, or second Hoppoo, as he is called by the merchants, who are obliged to defray the expenses of these visits in every way. They find the secretary, however, more easily satisfied than his superior. The humiliating manner in which all the nations of Europe suffer



the Chinese to impose upon them in their trade with them, is certainly a severe reproach to their national dignity, and one which their united efforts and remonstrances might readily overcome.\*

I here annex as correct a list as I could obtain of the Officers, or Mandarins, composing the government of Canton.

LIST OF THE MANDARINS GOVERNING THE  
PROVINCES OF QUANTONG AND QUANTSY.

Viceroy, called	<i>Tsan-Tuck.</i>
Military Governor of the citadel of Canton, a relative of the Emperor (having a garrison of five thousand Tartar soldiers under his com- mand), and called	<i>Jahn-Quhan.</i>
Second in command,	<i>Thoo-Thung-Foo.</i>
Civil Governor,	<i>Foo-Yuen.</i>
Treasurer,	<i>Poo-Tchen-Tsee.</i>

\* To effect this, however, the several nations trading to China must unite without envy or jealousy, and send a *single* ambassador to Pekin to remonstrate in the name of them *all*, and to demand such concessions as are deemed necessary. In case of a refusal the object should be to unite in forcing them. If there could be no other mode left to bring the Chinese Government to act with friendliness and liberality, some powerful nation should wage war with them.



Chief Judge of the Criminal

Code, called *An-Tcha-Tsee.*

Mandarin of the canal and river imposts, and  
the interior trade, called *Kong-Chow-Foo.*

Keeper of land patents and conveyances, Com-  
missary of the Emperor's troops, and Rice  
Mandarin, called *Le-Ung-Tho.*

Collector and Inspector of house taxes—the  
ground on which houses stand being mea-  
sured and taxed by him every three years,  
and a census of their inhabitants taken—

*Tseen-Tho.*

Mandarin Minister of Police *Nam-Hoy-Une.*

Second Police Mandarin, for the south, or Ho-  
nam side of the river, called *Poone-Yune.*

Two petty Police Mandarins, *Tcho-Yung,*  
and *Sy-Ing.*

Collector of Foreign Duties, or Director  
of the Customs, *Hoppoo.*

This last Mandarin has a secretary, called  
the Second Hoppoo, and an immense list of  
officers and servants, whose names and employ-  
ments it would be superfluous to insert here.  
Suffice it to say, that all the collectors, tide-  
waiters, Water-Mandarins, &c. are under his  
control; and the disposal of those places is a  
matter of no small importance to him.



The Tsan-Tuck, or Viceroy, is a military, as well as civil, governor. Whenever any revolt or disturbance takes place, that requires the interference of an army, if he perform his duty strictly, he commands it in person. Several revolts occurred during my residence in China; and, although, in every instance, the Viceroy moved from Canton, he always took care to keep at a respectable distance from the field of battle.

His Imperial Chinese Majesty invests his Viceroys, who are very distant from Pekin, with the power of deciding the grand question of life or death, in order to avoid delay as to cutting off heads, in case of rebellion.

All matters relating to the criminal proceedings, at the court of the An-Tcha-Tsee, are sent, through the Viceroy, to Pekin for the Imperial decision. His council is composed of the Civil Governor, or Foo-Yune, the Pootchen-Tsee, An-Tcha-Tsee, and Kong-Chow-Foo; though, it is understood, he is not obliged to abide by their opinions, having full power to act in opposition, should he deem it necessary for the good of the empire.

In punishing ordinary crimes, the An-Tcha-Tsee is supposed to adhere to the letter of the



penal code. Capital crimes are punished with death, by lopping off the limbs, cutting off the head, tearing out the heart and entrails, and exposing the mangled body to the dogs and birds. The indefatigable diligence of Sir George Staunton has furnished the public with an interesting work on this subject.

Theory and practice, however, are two different things; and lucky is it for the Chinese people, that their laws, too refined in cruelty, are sometimes softened by the venality of their governors. Where money can crush justice, and where it is also necessary for procuring it, surely the best code of laws is but a dead letter, obsolete, and useless. We must speak of the Chinese as we find them, disregarding the highly-wrought principles and maxims which adorn their books, and are never reduced to practice. Vainly does a nation boast of the goodness of her laws, when they are badly administered. In China, bribery and corruption, with all their concomitant vices, sap the morals of the people, encourage villainy, and arrest the sword of justice. The law against homicide is extremely rigid, requiring life for life; yet the rich are often guilty of this crime, as the rapacious ma-



gistrates find it more to their advantage to have their wealth than their lives.

If a person die suddenly, unless the circumstance be kept a profound secret, the master of the house is treated in the same manner as if he had been guilty of homicide, until he proves the fact. This keeps the Chinese always on their guard, and ready to deceive the Mandarins, or to bribe them, if necessity should require. A person of my acquaintance related to me, that he had a large garden, where there were some nice fruits, which were often robbed; and, although his servants had frequently watched, they could not detect the offender. He, therefore, determined to watch with them; and, having armed himself with a pike, accompanied his two servants in the night, to try and detect the thief. Not long after he had placed himself at his post, he saw a naked man approach the trees near where he stood. He called to him to stand still, or he would kill him. The fellow, frightened at this summons, made off with all speed; and the master of the house, seeing him about to escape, threw his pike at him, which entered his back just below his left shoulder, and killed him on the spot. He was much alarmed at the accident; but, recollecting himself, he promised his



servants a handsome present, to keep the affair secret; and, with their assistance, he threw the dead body over the wall into his neighbour's garden. This, too, was managed in so careful a manner, as to render it impossible to discover from whence the body came. His neighbour, who was a very rich tea-merchant, felt not less alarmed than astonished, on the following morning, when his servants informed him that a dead man had been found in the garden, who, to all appearance, had been murdered. The story soon reached the Mandarin of the district, who proceeded, in all due form, to execute the duties of his office, and examine the body, not a little delighted to have to deal with such a man as the rich tea-merchant. A corpse found in this way cannot be touched or removed until the Police-Mandarin of the district comes and inquires into the manner of the person's death; and, if there is any thing suspicious, he will not suffer the dead man to be taken away before he has had some satisfactory proofs of the cause of his death. As nothing satisfactory could be elicited from the tea-merchant, who, conscious of his innocence, thought the Mandarin could do him no harm, the latter commenced a regular process, and made him daily visits, besides send-



ing for him frequently; and thus he perplexed him exceedingly. All this time the dead man was left in the garden, which being near the house, and the body beginning to putrify, such an odour was caused as became almost insupportable. At length the merchant, overpowered by the bad smell, and alarmed by the measures the Mandarin was preparing to prove him culpable, was happy to compromise the affair, and have the dead body removed, on paying the sum of 4500 Spanish dollars!

The decisions of a clever Chinese judge are drawn up with infinite skill and cunning. He makes ingenious representations (if paid for so doing) to elude the letter of the law, and *vice versa*, should it prove necessary to bring a person under its lash. I know not how those matters are conducted at Peking; but at Canton no one attempts a law-suit without having plenty of money to pay his way, and very strong interest into the bargain.

A few years after the above-mentioned adventure, the person who put the dead man into the merchant's garden, had himself a disagreeable affair, though it cost him less trouble and money to get rid of it. In the street where he lived, and not far from his house, was an eating-house



for the lower classes. A beggar, who had been half-starved, receiving from some compassionate person sufficient to purchase himself a very ample repast, repaired to this eating-house, and called for several things at the same moment, which he ate most voraciously. The owner of the eating-house requested him to stop a while before he ate again, as he perceived it must have been some time since he had satisfied his hunger. The beggar, however, would not listen to reason; he demanded food for his money until it was all expended, and then dropped down dead. This happened towards evening; and, when the host perceived it was dark and no one in the street, he and his servants took up the dead mendicant and placed him at the door of the person before mentioned. On the following morning the Beggar-Mandarin of the district came to him, and was very troublesome, declaring the beggar had been killed by some of his family, and that he should institute a process against him immediately. The accused, however, had the good fortune to find a witness, who had seen the keeper of the eating-house and his servants put the body at his door. Although the Beggar-Mandarin could now do nothing against him in law, he refused to take



the corpse away; and he was obliged to pay him two hundred dollars, to have it removed before it became offensive. No doubt he got a good fee likewise from the master of the eating-house.

I have understood that venality is not so barefaced at Pekin as at Canton, and the best Mandarins going to this province are obliged to be as venal as those about them, or they will lose their places. When they cannot pull a man down who disagrees with them, they combine together to get him advanced to some high post at Pekin, that puts him completely out of the way of interfering with them.

In explaining the abuses which exist in China, it is not my intention to pass a severe and general censure on the conduct of all the Mandarins of that large empire. Certainly I have heard of some upright individuals among them, though they are rare: but we may say, without fear of contradiction, that no where under heaven is the adage, "every man has his price," so well exemplified as in the Celestial Empire. This, however, is the fault of the Government, which debases every one. Where there is no high sense of honor, no fine feelings and sentiments, no school for morals and probity,—where the *bamboo* reduces the highest



Mandarin to a footing with the meanest slave, —we certainly have no right to expect any thing better! A semi-barbarian nation, the Chinese have been falsely renowned for virtues which could not find growth in such a soil as is morally theirs. A thousand additional examples might be given to prove that China is far from being yet civilised; indeed I think no one who has lived a year in China will attempt to deny the fact.

The punishment which the penal code orders to be inflicted on those who do not pay their debts, or the interest on them regularly, must be procured by purchase from the officers of the crown at a price that renders justice extremely expensive; and therefore the Chinese avoid this method as much as possible, unless instigated by malice against the debtor. There being no law against usury, the interest of money is extremely high, on account of the many opportunities of speculating, and because the Chinese merchants are determined gamblers in commerce, as the whole nation is in cards, dice, &c.

Eight hundred *cash* (a name given by Europeans) were formerly given for a Spanish piastre; now, only seven hundred and fifty in common purchases; and there are certain articles



sold at the rate of seven hundred and twenty: this, however, is according to the bargain between the buyer and seller. The Chinese name of this copper coin is *tcheon*; but in writing it is called *tung tcheen*. I have seen the coolies, or labourers, who are generally paid in *cash* after their work, invariably collect into a circle, and play at cards or dice for what they have earned. Cash are perforated in the centre with a square hole, for the convenience of stringing them together, and are the only current coin in China. Ten cash make one cantareen, ten cantareens make one mace, and ten mace make one tael. The tael is equal to one Spanish dollar and  $\frac{60}{100}$ . The Hong-Merchants only allow seven hundred and twenty tcheens to the Spanish dollar in their dealings with foreigners, and the shopkeepers seven hundred and fifty.

There being no banks, nor any paper-money, payments are always made in specie, such as Spanish dollars, and gold and silver ingots of ten taels weight. This mode is inconvenient and dangerous, as well as a temptation to robbers, of whom there is no want in China. Letters of exchange are not used generally, though I have been told they are sometimes employed by large capitalists, who have, by long



dealings and acquaintance, a confidence in each other. Although merchandise is very often sold on credit, yet I never heard of money-lenders lending their money without having collateral security in property of some kind, to indemnify themselves in case of a default of payment by their debtors. In this way money is often lent out at Canton as high as twenty *per cent.* though sometimes as low as twelve *per cent.* according to the demand in the market; but certainly, if it were given on mere personal security, it would cost twenty-five *per cent.* at least.

New Spanish dollars are much sought after, it being the custom to pay certain silk manufactures in the interior in new dollars, and the manufacturers, from habit, will accept nothing else; so that the Canton merchants having purchases to make there, have been forced to pay from three to six *per cent.* when they are scarce, and in *sy-see* silver ingots of ten taels each. The difference between new Spanish dollars and *sy-see*, or Chinese ingots, is scarcely ever less than from one and a half to two *per cent.*

A piece of *sy-see* is a square ingot of the weight above mentioned, with a stamp upon it, and is paid or received by weight, or *touch*;



both quality and size often differing from the standard of one hundred *touch*, as well for gold as for silver; consequently, valued accordingly. The best gold and silver ingots, however, are generally from eighty-eight to ninety-two *touch*, very seldom approaching nearer the standard.\*

In China there are no banks, insurance offices, nor, in fact, any useful public institutions; which proves more strongly than any thing else I can adduce, how far they are behind European nations in civilization. Property, consequently, is exposed to all sorts of risks, and lost without hope of redemption. No doubt the money-lenders in China take this into account, and increase the interest in proportion to the risk. It is, however, truly astonishing, that a nation so completely mercantile as the Chinese, and who have paid so much attention to their inland commerce and navigation, the activity of which is beyond all conception, should have neither banks nor insurance-offices.

\* The value of ten taels is therefore merely nominal, because they approach near to it; but their real value is always ascertained by weight and *touch*; and those which differ from the standard are bored, for the purpose of its being seen whether there is not some other metal in the centre, a cheat sometimes practised.



## CHAPTER IV.

Population of Canton—State of the garrison—Defective organization of the army—Civil Wars—"The Celestial Fraternity"—Better qualities of the Chinese—Ill effects of their education—General duplicity—Occasional honesty—Opinion as to the population of the Empire—Agriculture and Horticulture—Tenure of land—Mechanic arts—Causes of the Chinese success in the art of dyeing.

CANTON is said by the Chinese to contain upwards of one million of souls; but I should give it no more than from eight to nine hundred thousand.

The garrison, under the command of the Jahn-Quhan, a cousin of the Emperor,\* and a military man, amounts to 5,000 Tartars, who are placed there for the defence of the citadel, and cannot be marched out without a special

\* Tao-Kuang is the Chinese name of the present Emperor, who is the second son of Kia-King, and mounted the throne in the thirty-ninth year of his age.



order from the Emperor himself. When the Ladrões, or pirates, came very near to Canton, the Viceroy with difficulty collected about 400 ragged soldiers, whom I saw armed with match-locks and pikes, and with very little ammunition; several days being required, besides the assemblage of all the Mandarins of the town, in council, before it can be attempted to touch the ammunition in the imperial stores. Whilst this ceremony was under performance, the town might have been taken two or three times. His motley band, therefore, did not get equipped and on march until after the pirates had retired with their booty. They, however, boldly continued their march, and robbed and plundered those whom the pirates had spared. Some tradesmen, who lived in that part of the country, assured me they had done more mischief than the pirates.

Nothing can be more despicable than the organization of the Chinese army; and neither officers nor soldiers receive more than a bare pittance, scarcely enough to procure the common necessities of life. It cannot be wondered at, then, that they should resort to rapine.

Their infantry have pikes and match-locks, and a large kind of axe fixed to a long pole, in



the use of which they are very expert. The cavalry have swords, and bows and arrows; on these last they depend most, and the northern inhabitants excel in the use of them.

I have been told that the whole military force of the Empire is upwards of a million of men. This may be true; but, I will answer for it there never existed an army of the same numerical force, so feeble, so little adequate to the defence of the country, or so perfectly ignorant of the art of war.

In the province of Fokien, civil wars have occurred between two powerful clans, which the military were unable to quell. Indeed, they never attempt it, when eight to ten thousand men of a side meet to decide some family quarrel. They look calmly on until the affair has had its bloody issue, when they intrigue with the stronger party, to deliver over for trial some of those whom they have conquered. The governor then dispatches a flaming account to Peking, relating the victory obtained over the rebels; and asks permission to cut off the heads of the prisoners. On receiving an answer (always in favour of cutting off heads), those poor wretches suffer punishment, and there ends the affair.



There is a sect in China, very formidable, called "the Celestial Fraternity," who, certainly, if what the Chinese say of them be true, have some influential characters among them, by whose intrigues many of the revolts we have read of have been produced. Although the fraternity at Canton is said to be composed of gamesters, robbers, pirates, and the very dregs of society, these men, being very daring, do oftentimes defy the police. Their object, I have been told, is the subversion of the Tartar dynasty.

Too much cannot be said in praise of the frugality, active industry, and native good and tractable disposition of the Chinese people generally. These qualities, under a good government, would be a source of great national wealth, power, and happiness. Although the Chinese are apparently very intelligent, and by no means deficient in genius, yet there is something in their government, language, manners, and customs, that prevents the manifestation of this, and confines its effect to a certain sphere, from which it seems unable to extricate itself. Their education, if it deserves the name, is certainly very defective, though it prepares them to live in the world, to know how to deceive and to



detect those who would betray; in short, to practise all the art and cunning for which the Asiatics are, generally, so remarkable. A Chinese gentleman told me himself, that, "in his country, to tell an untruth was not considered dishonorable, especially if it were managed so as to escape immediate detection; for," added he, "every one knows we are often obliged to lie, in our own defence. But if a lie be awkwardly managed, it shows want of cleverness, and is, of course, disgraceful."

Beyond all doubt, the Chinese put the best possible face on matters. There is a steady, unalterable gravity in the features and manners of those who are accustomed to deceive, that bids defiance to the keenest penetration.

Amongst the common classes, I have found many kind, good, and honest men. I have known some servants in Canton, who have been entrusted with immense sums in specie, and have acted as cashiers for many years; and I have never heard of their deceiving their masters. In general, the servants recommended by the factory *comprador* are trust-worthy, as he makes himself responsible for their conduct, and, of course, is cautious as to whom he recommends. I have, however, often been surprised that Europeans



are not more frequently cheated by their servants in a country where there are so many temptations, and where vices of every sort are so prevalent. Those who serve the Europeans at Canton are, for the most part, natives of the country near Macao, where they are educated purposely, and taught to speak English after their manner.

I have already expressed my opinion of the population of Canton, and am still more incredulous as it regards that of the whole Empire. If those who would give to China a population of three hundred millions, only reflected that the whole of them eat rice, they would find that all the rice-grounds of the Empire would be quite insufficient to support them.\* Should we allow her one hundred and fifty millions, (nearly the population of all Europe,) I think my readers will say it is a very unwieldy mass for any government to control, much more such an enervated one as that of China. Ambassadors, missionaries, and others who have been at Peking, were conducted, as well for political

\* It is only the low lands, which can be easily inundated, that are most generally cultivated with rice. There is a kind of rice that grows on high land, but yields only one crop a year, and is very little used.



motives as for convenience of travelling, in boats, on the canals and rivers which intersect the richest, best cultivated, and most populous parts of the Empire. It is, therefore, not difficult to account for the extravagant impressions made on their minds, nor to perceive that the unexampled activity of the inland commerce was calculated to confirm those impressions. It would be ridiculous to take the number of inhabitants on a square league of the country presented to their eyes, as a hypothesis, from whence to deduce the population of the Empire, or to imagine that all the land is equally well cultivated. About Canton and Macao, and, I am told, in many other parts, the high lands are very little cultivated, being generally set apart for the dead. Those about Canton are entirely occupied as burial-places. The low grounds, which they can cover with water, are their peculiar care, for producing rice—the staff of life in China.

Their instruments of husbandry are, a very awkward plough that runs deep, drawn by buffaloes, and a large wooded hoe armed with iron. In spots where the ground is too soft for the buffaloes to walk, the hoe is employed, though this amphibious and useful animal will work



where the common ox, or a horse, would be unable to walk. Those rice-grounds which cannot be inundated directly from the rivers, creeks, or canals, have water thrown into them by square wooden chain-pumps, very ingeniously made, and worked with a species of windlass, which two men turn by walking on wheels, attached to the windlass, and having steps purposely prepared to receive the feet: these throw off a very large quantity of water in a few hours. From the first field the water is thrown into one situated higher, and from thence into a third, if necessary.

I know not whether it be the practice in other parts of China, but about Canton and Macao, every stalk of rice is transplanted by hand, with great regularity! There are two crops a year; one in July, the other in October. Common coarse rice, such as is used by the poor, generally sells at from three-quarters of a dollar to one dollar and a quarter the pecul, of 133 $\frac{1}{4}$  English pounds. Should it advance beyond this price the poor classes suffer severely; but if it rise to two and a half or three dollars the pecul, many are unable to purchase it, and are starved to death.\*

\* In one of those terrible crises parents were seen to sell their children for a few pounds of rice.



In the cultivation of vegetables of all sorts, the Chinese are not to be surpassed by any nation of the globe. Whoever has visited Whampoa must have seen a striking proof of this assertion in the gardens which adorn the steep sides of the hills of Danes' and French Islands, where they rise in regular gradation, like a pair of stairs, from their bases to the summits. It must cost immense pains to cultivate them, and to water them, as they do, at least twice a day. These gardens exhibit, in the strongest manner, the persevering industry of the inhabitants, and delight the beholder with a rich vegetation, clothed in various shades of the liveliest verdure.

The emperor is said to be the proprietor of all the land, although it is suffered to be held by individuals, and transferred from one to another for ever, or so long as the tax to which it is subject is paid regularly to the Crown. If a person is irregular or negligent in the payment of his taxes, he is punished, and his land taken from him. Most rich landholders give their land, on rent, to the actual cultivators from year to year, and they receive their payment, most generally, in cattle, hogs, fowls, rice, and the various productions of the soil. I



was pleased to learn, also, that when the crops failed, the proprietors were often very indulgent to the peasants, and regulated their demands in proportion.

The perfection of the mechanic arts in China cannot be denied in certain instances; but this is, evidently, not the result of a regular combination of scientific improvements. It appears to be the effect of the laboured experience of ages, brought slowly and difficultly to a certain point, where it is stationary, and cannot advance further, until science shall dispel the prejudices of habit and the clouds of ignorance.

There is certainly a superiority in several of their silk manufactures, as it regards the gloss and the fixing of the colours, and the rendering them so bright and permanent; but this is not produced by any secret mordant or process unknown to Europeans. I was once present at the dyeing of silks; and, on examination, found the process conducted in the simplest manner, with the commonest mordants used in England. They know very little of the chemical agents,\*

\* They are certainly acquainted with some of the practical parts of chemistry. Cinnabar is made in Canton, as well as some other preparations of mercury; and I am told (though I never saw them) mineral prepara-



the use of which has become so common in Europe; and the brightness and permanency of their colours must be derived from a very nice experience of the application of the mordants, the climate, and other favourable and concurring circumstances. Owing to the cheapness of labour, a very large number of hands are employed; therefore the work goes on with a rapidity almost beyond conception, and the silks are immediately hung out to dry, during the prevalence of the north wind, called by them *Pak Fung*. Certainly, in any other climate, and under different management, more time would be required, and that circumstance would suffice to alter very much the appearance of the colours. The Chinese never attempt to dye any fine silks with rich colours, until the *Pak Fung* commences, which generally happens towards the last of September, or the beginning of October. This wind is so remarkable in its effects, and so immediately felt, that should it begin at night, even when all the doors and windows are shut, the extreme dryness of the air penetrates into the house immediately, and

tions of medicine. It is said that a Chinese doctor always asks which the patient prefers, mineral or vegetable treatment: the former being dearer than the latter.



the furniture and floors begin to crack, with a noise almost as loud as the report of a pistol. If the floors have been laid down in summer, when the air is damp, or if the planks be not exceedingly well seasoned, and secured with iron cramps, they will open an inch at least when the north-east monsoon commences. The Chinese will not even pack teas or silks for exportation in damp weather; that is to say, unless they are hurried to do it by the strangers who have business with them, and wish to get their ships away sooner than ordinary. I have known a ship detained three weeks longer than the captain wished at Canton, because the security-merchant would not pack the silks which formed part of her cargo, until the weather became favourable. This will account, in some measure, not only for the permanency and beauty of the dye, but likewise for the care that is taken to preserve it. The Chinese say that if newly-dyed silks be packed before they are perfectly dry, or in damp weather, they will not only lose the brightness of the colour, but will also become spotted. They may have some secret in the spinning and tissue of silks, which we know nothing of; but certainly not in dyeing them.



## CHAPTER V.

Remarks on the Chinese character—Prevalent misrepresentations—Chinese chronology—National vanity and arrogance—Inefficacy of the Laws—Corruption of the Government—Sale of honours and distinctions—Observations on the Peasantry—The Poor of Canton and its suburbs—Diseases—Practice and effects of smoking opium—Low state of medical knowledge—An anecdote.

I WISH to praise and to admire every thing that admits of such a tribute in China, and I shall always entertain a great respect and esteem for the frugality, sobriety, and industry of the people; but when we come to speak of government, sciences, religion, liberality of public institutions, improvements in the arts of civilized life, morals, manners, &c. the eulogists certainly have published what is both false and ridiculous. The Chinese are perhaps superior to the Turks, but they are nevertheless, like them, semi-barbarians, and almost as far from the point of real civilization. Indeed, almost all the other Asiatic nations deserve no better



appellation. The Chinese have been charged with being jealous, insincere, envious, and distrustful: this is not their fault, but the defect of their government, and the consequence of the want of liberal education. What right have we to expect more from a man, who from his infancy is taught to practice every sort of deceit, as being necessary for him to be able to cope with his rapacious governors, or pursue his schemes in life? I, therefore, wonder much that I should have found many good, honest, and faithful men in China. It would be absurd to talk of the motives they had for being so: let those be conscience, interest, or what they may, the *fact* is what I wish to show; and when authors say that there has never been the least gratitude or attachment on the part of Chinese towards Europeans, it is a calumny; for I have known, myself, many such instances. Good conduct, honest dealings, and attachment to a master or friend, are sufficient to call for eulogy where they exist, without inquiring into the motives. If all motives for action were nicely scrutinized, even in our own country, I make no doubt the result would oftentimes detract from what appears noble and disinterested.



The chronology of China, which refers back to some twenty or thirty centuries before Christ, must be of course in a great measure fabulous. There is little doubt that, when the time comes that Europeans shall be able to gain free access to the sources necessary to elucidate their history, it will be found some thousands of years more modern than their extravagant pretensions have assumed. In spite of these and other pretensions, the Chinese in every respect fall far short of Europeans; but you cannot convince a Chinese that any thing in his country can possibly be inferior. His egotism and intolerance are imbibed with his mother's milk, and carefully fostered and encouraged by his *liberal* government, so as to teach him to hate and despise the strange devils\* who come from the fag end of the world.

I have read with a feeling of assent an extract from Mr. Morrison's valuable work, where he says—"Even the government is at the utmost pains to make it appear to the people that its conduct is reasonable and benevolent on all occasions. They have found by an ex-

\* *Fang Kwei*, the polite appellation given us by the Chinese.



perience of many ages that it is necessary to make out an argument: they are not nice about strict adherence to truth," &c. There never existed a government that had greater necessity for false reasoning, and specious arguments, to apologize for the vilest administration that has disgraced any country of the globe. Their "golden code" of laws, as it has been called by their admirers, is too rigid and too cruel to be administered strictly, and is now only employed as a cloak to cover the avarice, injustice, and rapine of the constituted authorities. From time to time, the mild and benevolent proclamations of the Emperor, clothed in highly-wrought metaphors, and all that insinuating and specious language for which the Chinese are remarkable, are put forth to charm and amuse the nation.

In former times, the Chinese Emperors sent annually to every province of the empire a certain number of Mandarins of high rank and great acquirements, chosen from amongst the wisest and most virtuous, to examine the pretensions of all the young men who were candidates for nobility. These were by them to be impartially chosen, even from the poorer



classes, without regard to any other distinction than talents.

The venality of the present administration has robbed this institution of its intrinsic value, and deceit and avarice suffer gilded ignorance to tread with unhalloved step where science and virtue should alone be seen. Many rich shopkeepers' sons, who have more money than talent, contrive to get themselves nominated in preference to those who have been expressly prepared, and have spent much time and money in rendering themselves capable of filling offices under government. Subjects are always given by the Mandarins; and those who write the best theses on them ought to be presented with the titles of nobility. But alas! if the letters are not written in gold, they have but little value with a Chinese Judge. Indeed, that metal may be said to be the touch-stone of the Chinese heart.

With regard to the peasantry, those whom I have had an opportunity of seeing in the environs of Canton, although coarse and rude in their manners, are much less inclined to be impertinent than the common class in the city. There is some apology to be made for the cu-



riosity of those who have never seen a stranger, but none for their city brethren, who see foreigners constantly, and who never fail to treat them with contempt, addressing them with the polite name of *Fang-Kwei*, or strange devil. This is also attributable to the government.

The poor of Canton and its suburbs live wretchedly; not so those who occupy the boats on the water. I have been informed that from sixty to eighty thousand souls inhabit boats and sampans—a smaller sort of boats which lie before the town. These people lead active, industrious lives, have, apparently, a greater facility of obtaining a livelihood than those on shore, and, though inferior in consideration, enjoy the advantages of a wholesome atmosphere, cleaner habitations, and, consequently, better health. A well-kept sampan is completely covered from the sun and the weather; every board daily scoured clean and white by the women; the inside adorned with carved work, pictures, &c.; a little temple in one corner for the images (or *penates*); the kitchen under the stern sheets, &c.—present altogether the miniature picture of a comfortable dwelling; whereas the houses on shore, although built of brick, are low, confined, and filthy, a number



of people are crowded into one apartment, uncleanly in their persons, and their food not always of the most wholesome; and the whole offers a disgusting picture of misery. The poorest description of boats are indeed dirty, but never so much so as the houses; and water, being always near at hand, promotes cleaner and better habits.\*

In the autumn, at the commencement of the north-east monsoon, the suburbs of Canton, being low and damp, are almost constantly visited by agues and intermittent fevers; and, twice or thrice, in the course of seven years, there has been an epidemic resembling what is called in Europe the jail fever. This distemper generally carried off a number of the poorer inhabitants, who were exposed in damp situations and unwholesome air with bad food, but it rarely

\* The water of the river is so very turbid, it cannot be used without filtering, even in cookery. The Chinese filter it and drink it, but strangers send to certain springs at the back of the town or a distance up the river for the water they drink. Their method of filtering the river water is by filling a large earthen vessel half full of sand, on which is placed a heavy flat stone to compress the sand. The water is then poured on it, and, after passing through it, runs out of a small hole made at the bottom, through a bamboo pipe.



affected the rich; its progress was so rapid, that many persons died in twenty-four or thirty-six hours after they were attacked. Those who got through that time, and could procure medical aid, or some wholesome food, generally recovered. In severe cases, the functions of the animal economy are suddenly impaired; and, in fact, the *vis vitæ* so rapidly suspended, that nothing but the immediate application of stimulant remedies can possibly save the sufferer. Calomel combined with opium, and bark and opium, even during the fever, generally caused it to intermit, although the contrary effect occurred for the moment; and a few doses conquered the disease. Some persons whom I saw, after having had the disease, and got rid of it without medicine, were left so weak that they must have died had I not sent them some bark and wholesome nourishing food.

The Chinese seem to dislike cathartics, especially those of a drastic nature. The constitutions of the upper and middle classes are generally feeble; they are often affected with pulmonary and bowel complaints, perhaps owing to the climate and the constant use of warm drinks.

One of the diseases that have made the most havoc in China is the small-pox. Vaccination,



however, has been introduced there by the humane and indefatigable Dr. Pearson, the head surgeon of the British Factory, who not only vaccinated numbers himself, but also taught the Chinese themselves to vaccinate. The leprosy, venereal, and elephantiasis, are also diseases common in China; and when the two last are combined, I believe them altogether incurable. There is a law that obliges whoever is seized with elephantiasis, whether rich or poor, high or low, to quit his house and family, resign his property over to his relations, and become a beggar and dependant on their bounty, besides being forced to inhabit the boats, which are moored in a particular part of the river, for those people to live in who are afflicted with this terrible disorder. Its effects on the human system are truly shocking to contemplate. The loss of the nose, lips, hands, and feet is very common; added to which, the body and limbs are swollen, the skin raised as if inflated, the lymph, corrupted, oozes at every pore in a bloody ichor,—forming, altogether, the most mis-shapen and disgusting object ever beheld. When this misfortune happens to a rich man, he confines himself, and endeavours to keep it a secret by bribing the Mandarin of the district;



but should any of his relations have designs on his fortune, they can apply to higher authority, and have him immediately removed and made a beggar.

Blindness is extremely common amongst the poorer classes; and the Chinese told me that many are born blind. If this be true, at least the idea is quite absurd that the steam from the hot rice, which the poor people eat out of a bowl held close to the face, for the conveniency of pushing it into their mouths with the *chop-sticks*,\* may be the cause of it. Others suppose that the use of rice instead of bread produces it; but I rather imagine it is a disease resulting from the climate.

There is, certainly, more deformity amongst the human species in China than in other parts of the world, which may be accounted for from the sedentary habits and feeble constitutions of the women who live on shore, and who have the disgusting, small, maimed feet. Those who inhabit the boats have large feet, and both men and women are, generally, as well formed as the people of other parts of the world. Mechanics

\* *Chop-sticks* are two small sticks held in the right hand, and used instead of forks, all their victuals being cut up beforehand.



and shopkeepers, who also lead sedentary lives, have many chronic complaints; and all classes those which result from debauchery and smoking opium. Consumption and spitting of blood carry off those who make too much use of opium.

Opium for smoking is prepared into an extract, as our apothecaries purify it for medicinal purposes. The proportion necessary is very nicely weighed, and placed in a pipe made purposely, with a very small bowl, a long stem, and a narrow channel for the smoke. Its first effects are stimulant and excite the passions. Afterwards, the person is left in a kind of stupid langour for several hours, the visions of his mind resembling the feverish dreams of a man in ill health. Smokers, however, have assured me they had invariably most pleasing dreams, and visions of a most enchanting kind. They, certainly, must find an almost inexpressible delight in smoking; for I have seen men, who have confessed to me that they knew their lives must shortly pay the forfeit, but that yet they could not muster up courage to throw off the fascination. I cured two or three of my acquaintances, who had not been very old smokers, by the following plan. At the time the patient wished to



smoke, I gave him a dose of laudanum, nearly equal in force to the opium he was in the habit of using. This threw him into a profound sleep; and, when he awoke, I made him immediately drink a glass or two of Madeira, and eat some strong food. The effects of the laudanum were not so strong nor so lasting as those of the opium, nor was the appetite so far destroyed as before. By a constant repetition of this process, gradually reducing the dose every day, the individual forgot, in a short time, the use of his opium pipe, though he would use to smoke tobacco; and he gained strength so fast, that the laudanum at length served merely as a stimulus to keep up his spirits; and he became, in this manner, weaned from a most pernicious habit that would have ruined his constitution in a short time.

There are no surgeons in China: consequently, anatomy is a science of which they are almost totally ignorant. I once conversed with one of the first physicians of Canton, through a good interpreter, and found he was not only ignorant of anatomy, but had none but the most confused notions of the circulation of the blood. He believed that it circulated differently on the right and left sides,—the reason, said he, why



Chinese physicians feel both wrists when they visit a patient! Nature, and moderation in eating and drinking, do more for the Chinese than all their doctors.

When they are wounded, there are no people so easily healed as the Chinese; fractures, which in other countries would require amputation, are there cured without the loss of limb. It may serve to account for this in some degree, if I state that the food of the poorer classes is principally rice and vegetables, accompanied by a couple of little ragoûts of fish or flesh, and also a glass or two of their favourite *samtchoo*, which is very rarely drunk to excess.

Several workmen were placing tiles on the roof of a house, not far from where I lived, when the beam that supported it, being old and rotten, broke, and the roof and the whole party fell into the house. There were no limbs broken, but fifteen of the men received cuts on their heads and bodies; some of them very deep. As the master-workman was an old acquaintance, he brought them all to my house, and requested me to dress them. I washed their wounds with laudanum, and, closing the lips with strips of court-plaster, gave orders not to remove the bandages until the wounds should suppu-



rate. Although some had several deep cuts, only two wounds suppurated, and these were on the back part of the head,—a place which the Chinese refused to have shaved, and, consequently, the hair interfered with the adhesive quality of the court-plaster. All the rest were healed by what is called the first intention. The master-builder (who was also a joiner), thanked me much; for he said, had the men been left without dressing their wounds, it would have taken a long time to cure them, and he should have been obliged to nurse and feed them. He never forgot this friendly act, and gave me many proofs of his gratitude afterwards.



## CHAPTER VI.

Canton—Climate and temperature—Construction of the streets—Respect exacted by the Mandarins—Pauhn-Kai-Qua, Chief of the Hong Merchants—Economy of fuel in Chinese cookery—Habits of the dwellers in boats—Chinese fops and gourmands—Prevalence of debauched habits—Education and manners of the women—Mischiefs of Polygamy—A convivial Anecdote—Idle amusements of the rich and poor—Fighting quails—Fighting crickets—Flower-boats—Singular custom attending the Tea-contracts—A characteristic anecdote.

CANTON, during the summer months, is very hot, the thermometer of Fahrenheit being seldom below 82°, and oftentimes rising to 93° or 95°, though I have no doubt but that the heat of the surrounding country, where the air has free access, is much more moderate. During that season, Europeans, who indulge themselves in the pleasures of the table, or expose themselves too much to the sun, are attacked with bilious



fevers, but very seldom with inflammatory ones. The winters have rarely any the slightest degree of frost,\* but the north-east monsoon blows cold, and renders fires necessary from November until March. It rains seldom, but mostly mists occur at that season, and a good deal of cloudy weather, when the wind gets too far to the eastward. Generally speaking, the climate of Canton is a very good one for those who like warm climates, and very healthy, where proper precaution is taken by clothing according to the changes of temperature.

Most of the streets of Canton are very narrow, being only intended for persons on foot; for horses are not often seen, except in the suite of some Mandarin passing through the town. Whenever a Mandarin passes, every one is obliged to give way, and those who are in sedan chairs are set down by the side of the street until he has gone by. His equipage is also a sedan-chair, but of a large size, with glass-windows, and carried on the shoulders of four, six,

\* During seven years residence, I saw ice but twice, and this was obtained by putting plates on the top of the house, with very little water in them, merely enough to cover the surface. The ice was not thicker than a pane of glass.



ten, or twelve men, according to his rank. Before him several fellows run with whips, which they apply without mercy to whoever obstructs the way; others beat gongs to warn the crowd; whilst some cry out with a shrill voice like the howling of dogs. The higher his rank, the larger his suite, the greater is the noise made by his followers and out-runners. These fellows are insolent and abusive beyond measure, and often commit depredations, as they go along the streets, at the stalls of the fruit-sellers and from the eating shops, which have always provisions ready prepared and exposed for sale, on large boards, at the windows.

I never was in a country where the contrast between opulence and poverty is so striking; and yet, with all their ostentation, even some of the richest Chinese I knew were extremely economical. The virtue of economy seems to be better understood in China than in most other countries of the globe. The Chinese, however, are so fond of festivals, that even misers forget their love of gold in the celebration of them. *Pauhn-Kai-Qua*, the famous chief of the Hong merchants, always entertained his guests in a splendid manner, and yet, although



a man of immense wealth, his early habits of economy remained with him all his life. He related to me that, when he had business to attend to early in the morning, he used to breakfast in his boat as he crossed the river, and dine as he returned in the evening, to save time; so that, the moment he came home, he was ready to converse with his agents and servants, and settled all the accounts of the day before he went to sleep. His expenses, when he breakfasted and dined in his boat, often came to but half a dollar, and never exceeded one dollar. This man amassed an immense fortune, and retired from business; but, some of the members of the Chinese Company having failed, the Emperor thought that *Pauhn-Kai-Qua's* fortune would be necessary to keep up its credit, and he obliged him to resume his old situation of chief of the Hong. During my last visit, in 1820, he died. He was a keen, sensible man, but excessively vain, and not very friendly to foreigners, whenever any thing occurred to oblige him to make demands on his own government. To a strong mind and a retentive memory, he added great curiosity, and, from his constant intercourse with Europeans, he had



acquired a good deal of general information, such as no other Chinese has ever possessed, or could have had an opportunity of obtaining.

No people understand better than the Chinese the application of fuel in cookery. They make use of earthen stoves, where the heat, from wood and charcoal mixed, is conducted exactly to the centre of the pot or vessel, in which they prepare their food; consequently, a very small portion is required to cook their victuals. Economy of fuel is a matter of no small importance in a country where wood is so scarce and dear,\* and the mine coal so bad, that it is difficult to make it burn; in fact, it is almost destitute of the bituminous quality that renders coal generally so inflammable, and is therefore quite unfit for kitchen use. You will see the inhabitants of a *sampan* (boat) lift up their stern sheets, make their fire, boil their rice, and dress a couple of stews of fish and vegetables, in

\* Wood in China is sold also by weight, and fetches from three mace to seven mace per pecul, in proportion to its size and hardness. The soft pine-wood is the cheapest. Charcoal costs from five to seven mace a pecul. The reader will readily perceive that fuel to a poor man must be very expensive, however indispensable.



the course of twenty or thirty minutes, and in the most cleanly manner. Even frogs, cats, dogs, and rats, which they eat occasionally, are washed and prepared as if they were the most delicate food; and their rice is always washed a dozen times before it is boiled. The men and women who inhabit the boats, and, indeed, the poor classes on shore, mingle together socially, and eat at the same table; although amongst the former there is evidently more hospitality and less ceremony. They are, likewise, of a cheerful lively disposition, and appear happier in every respect; nor are they half so ambitious of acquiring money. A boatman spends his money almost as fast as he earns it, perhaps, because he is more exposed to the exactions of the Mandarins, and thinks it wise to enjoy the present moment, rather than amass what he is in danger of being robbed of every hour. Within the last twenty years, however, I can perceive that the people who live in boats, about Whampoa and Canton, have the appearance of having bettered their condition, and that there is less actual misery amongst them than amongst the poor on shore.

I visited China in 1798, again in 1803, and remained there seven years, when I left it, and



returned in 1820, so that I have had a fair opportunity of forming observations. Some petty compradors, whom I left quite poor, and acting as assistants to rich masters, had, in the mean time, become rich themselves, and were keeping large shops. In confirmation of what I have before said of the good disposition and friendly conduct of many of the Chinese, I should remark, that almost all my old acquaintances sent me some little presents of fruits, tea, sweetmeats, &c. the moment they heard I was at Macao, although they could have no hopes of any advantage from it.

Many persons have supposed (who only know the Chinese superficially) that a nation so grave, sedate, and monotonous, cannot include either fops or *bons vivans*. They are, however, mistaken; few countries possess more of those worthies than China, though perhaps their talents are not carried to so great an excess as in other parts of the world. The dress of a Chinese *petit-maitre* is very expensive, being composed of the most costly crapes or silks; his boots or shoes of a particular shape, and made of the richest black satin of Nankin, the soles of a certain height; his knee-caps elegantly embroidered; his cap and button of



the neatest cut; his pipes elegant and high priced; his tobacco of the best manufacture of Fokien; an English gold watch; a tooth-pick, hung at his button, with a string of valuable pearls; a fan from Nankin, scented with *chulan* flowers. Such are his personal appointments. His servants are also clothed in silks, and his sedan-chair, &c. &c. all correspondingly elegant. When he meets an acquaintance, he puts on a studied politeness in his manners, and gives himself as many airs as the most perfect dandies in Europe, besides giving emphasis to all those fulsome ceremonies for which the Chinese nation is so remarkable.

The rich Chinese, who are cleanly, are all fond of dress; though some, from avarice, attend only to outward show, whilst the shirt and under-garments remain unchanged for several days, and expose, at the collar and sleeves, the dirty habits of the master through his splendid disguise. Those who are in the habit of mixing with Europeans are more attentive to cleanliness; but, generally speaking, the Chinese are certainly not so clean in their persons as one would expect from the inhabitants of a warm climate.

The Chinese indulge in every species of sensuality, are fond of indecent shows and books,



which debauch the minds of youth, and, indeed, are too apt to carry all pleasures to a criminal excess. At their theatres I have seen exhibitions such as it would be impossible to describe without giving offence to delicacy; and these before the women, who appeared quite pleased at the entertainment. This must be owing, on their part, to a want of education and refinement, and to the habit of witnessing spectacles which European women, of even the worst class, would turn from with disgust. At a Chinese theatre there is always a place set apart for the females (I will not call them ladies), separating them from the rest of the audience by a curtain or screen; but, as they sit in front, near the stage, one has a good view of them, and near enough to discover how much they seem pleased with the play.

Women in China are not even taught to read and write: needle-work, and music (if it deserves the name) are their only accomplishments. To kill time they play at cards and dominoes, and smoke incessantly.

Men and women of the better classes never mix in society; it is considered disgraceful to eat with their wives; they do not even inhabit the same side of the house. I have, however,



known some who broke through this custom, and who have assured me they found much pleasure in dining with their wives. Polygamy has certainly done a great deal of mischief in the way of morals. Some men, even at an advanced age, continue to increase their stock of wives when they have already sons grown to manhood. I have been confidently informed that intrigues between those sons and the younger wives, or concubines of the father, are not uncommon.

Dining once with a rich merchant, some comedies were represented to us, where the wit turned upon the refined tyranny of a husband, who beat his wives most unmercifully. We asked him if the wives did not sometimes rule the husband, and begged to have a piece of that kind acted for our amusement. Our host answered in the affirmative, and immediately ordered two or three comedies to be performed, in which the females were complete termagants, and made the poor husband appear the most pitiful hen-pecked wight imaginable. The strangers present all laughed heartily; and we could perceive the women enjoyed it beyond measure; but, the moment the master of the house discovered this, and that we passed some jests upon him, he became serious and embar-



rassed, and would not permit a continuance of those representations. We may therefore fairly conclude, that in spite of the strict and despotic manner in which wives are treated in China, they sometimes get the upper hand of their lordly masters. On stricter inquiry I found, that when a Chinese became enamoured of one of his wives in preference, she generally contrived to wheedle him, and govern him as she liked.

The rich men, however, are not over-blessed with domestic habits. They dissipate a great deal of their time at the theatres, or in parties on the water, at the flower-boats, or receptacles for public women, at the exhibitions of fighting quails, gaming, &c. This latter vice is very prevalent amongst all classes and descriptions of people, and is carried to a great excess. Pack-thai-Yen, whom I mentioned before as having been Civil Governor and also Viceroy of Canton, attacked it very severely; but, although he caused the public gaming-houses to be shut, and punished the proprietors, yet, in a short time afterwards, a number of new ones sprang up on the ruins of the old, and were as much frequented as if nothing had happened. No doubt the magical qualities of gold produced this



effect. It seems to be the talisman of the Chinese soul, the deity to whom he pays his most fervent adoration; nor ought we to feel surprised at his devotion, when he sees it bind the rod of justice, and arrest the arm of the executioner,

Besides cards and dice, they have other sports and games of chance peculiar to the country. The most remarkable are quail-fighting, cricket-fighting, shuttle-cock played with the feet, and tumbling, at which they are very expert. To make two male crickets fight, they are placed in an earthen bowl, about six or eight inches in diameter; the owner of each tickles his cricket with a feather, which makes them both run round the bowl different ways, frequently meeting and jostling one another as they pass. After several meetings in this way, they at length become exasperated, and fight with great fury, until they literally tear each other limb from limb! This is an amusement for the common classes; but quail-fighting belongs to the higher orders. Quails that are to be prepared for fighting require the strictest care and attention. Every quail has a separate keeper; he confines it in a small bag, with a running string at the top, constantly attached to his person; so that he carries the bird with him wherever he goes. The poor prisoner is rarely permitted to see the light, ex-



cept at the time of feeding, or when the keeper deems it necessary he should take the air for his health. When he airs his quail, he will hold him in his hand (taking great precautions not to spoil his plumage) for two or three hours at a time. The patient care and attention of the Chinese to their fighting-quails and singing-birds are equal to those of the fondest mother for a favourite child. When two quails are brought to fight, they are placed in a thing like a large sieve, in the centre of a table, round which the spectators stand to witness the battle and make their bets. Some grains of millet-seed are then put into the middle of the sieve, and the quails, being taken out of the bags, are put opposite to each other near the seed. If they are birds of courage, the moment one begins to eat the other attacks him, and they fight hard for a short time, say one or two minutes. The quail that is beaten flies up, and the conqueror remains, and is suffered to eat all the seed. I should suppose the best quail-fight has never lasted more than five minutes. Rich men have always a number of birds ready trained, in order to have as many battles as will occupy a considerable portion of the day. Immense sums of money are won and lost on them. A good deal



of time also is spent in making the bets. Sometimes one quail has been known to win several hundred battles, and, all of a sudden, gets beaten by a new and untutored bird; a circumstance which occasions high betting and fresh encounters, until the new comer is again beaten in turn. If we consider what a trifling gratification this sport affords, when compared with the time, trouble, and expense of preparing the quails, it is astonishing it should be so much esteemed. An extreme fondness for gaming can be the only inducement; but it exhibits at the same time a strong proof of their effeminate character. It is, however, pursued with great ardor in China, many persons losing and winning large fortunes at it, and some of the most avaricious men I was acquainted with, were great quail-fighters. I have been told also by the adepts, that there is a great deal of art in chusing and dressing quails, as well as feeding them and handling them.

Next to quail-fighting, the flower-boats occupy most of a Chinese gentleman's leisure hours. They have assured me that the women in those boats have more agreeable conversation, and are better educated than others, and are more genteel and engaging in their manner. A well-



spread table, of which the Chinese are great lovers, is always found prepared for the guests. Those boats are called flower-boats, from having the sides, windows, doors, &c. all carved in flowers, and painted green and gilded. They have three divisions, one at the bow, that is more elevated than the centre, smaller, and furnished with couches, curtains, &c.; then, descending two or three steps, the middle apartment, more spacious, occupying nearly two-thirds of the boat, with windows to open at either side to give free access to the air, as well as awnings over them, as a defence from the rays of the sun; thirdly, the stern is also some steps higher than the centre, and there the people who manage the boat live, have their kitchen, &c. Over this are two or three sleeping apartments, covered with bamboo mats, with a little gallery or viranda in front, where the women sleep and pass the day, as visitors seldom come to them before five or six o'clock in the evening. Several men go together; each chooses a favourite woman, and they all sit round a large table, well furnished, and eat, drink, sing, and play at cards until the morning. All women of this description, as well as the owners of the boat, are obliged to take out a license,



and pay for the same to a Mandarin expressly appointed to preside over them, and whose office, I have been told, is extremely lucrative. The boats are moored before a particular part of the town, in rows like streets, according to their size and price, so that every Chinese in proportion to his rank and the weight of his purse, knows where to go to amuse himself. There is, however, a positive prohibition for Europeans; and any stranger found in a flower-boat would not only be punished severely, but also be fined several thousand dollars. I have been told by the Chinese, that from forty to sixty thousand Spanish dollars are expended daily in the flower-boats of Canton! One of the Hong-merchants related to me, that, according to ancient custom, when making their contracts for tea (which is generally done a year in advance), they are obliged to invite the persons with whom they wish to contract, to partake of a repast in one of those boats. The bargain, he said, was always easy in proportion to the sumptuousness and splendour of the supper, during which it was concluded; and, although very expensive, he found it made up to him in the liberal condition of his contract. If he employed an agent to make his contract, he was



obliged also to pay the expense of an entertainment: and he generally got off cheaper than when he gave it himself, because more was expected of him as a Hong-merchant, and an honorary Mandarin.

I offer to my readers the following anecdote, as a corroborative proof of the extreme height to which venality, intrigue, and injustice are carried in China:

Two Hong-merchants, being poor and much in debt to the British factory, the President of the Select Committee conceived the plan of lending them a sufficient sum to make their tea contracts; the object being, by keeping up their credit, and watching their conduct, to enable them, eventually, to discharge their debts. It was thought, however, as they were dissipated men, imprudent to trust them with the money. The whole company of Hong-merchants were therefore cited before the President of the Select Committee, and consulted respecting the expediency of employing some confidential person; not belonging to the *Hong*, to conduct the business under the immediate direction of the British Chief. It was proposed the profits arising on the tea-purchases should be employed to liquidate the debts due by those two



individuals to the British company. Many of the Hong-merchants, and particularly two or three of the richest and most influential, were very jealous at the conduct of the Chief on behalf of their poor colleague. They artfully concealed their malice, and apparently consented to employ a confidential man, whom the Chief had known for many years, and of whose fidelity and honesty he had already sufficient proofs. Although the Hong-merchants consented, they took care not to inform the Chief of a most important circumstance, namely, that it was necessary for the agent not only to have a licence from them, but likewise a *chop* from the *hoppoo*, or he would be arrested. The matter thus arranged, the agent, as is customary, began to feast those with whom he wished to contract; but he had scarcely commenced operations before he was seized, robbed of all the money the Chief had advanced to him, and was then thrown into prison, together with the Hong-merchants for whom he had acted. As the richest and most influential of the Hong-merchants were leagued with the Mandarin's for their destruction, all the efforts of the President of the Select Committee in their behalf proved fruitless, and an order came from Peking



to banish the two merchants and the agent, for life, to Ely. One of the merchants died, the other was banished, and the agent, after being tortured and imprisoned for several months, was, at length, redeemed by his friends for about seven thousand dollars.



## CHAPTER VII.

Chinese habits—Tea-drinking—Smoking—Dress—Domestic entertainments—Comic performers—Pantomimes—Tumblers—Dinner Customs and Ceremonies—A Drinking Game—Birds' nest-soup—Chinese Cookery.

A CHINESE gentleman rises between ten and eleven o'clock; his breakfast is composed of half a dozen small dishes (or rather cups) of ragouts of fish, flesh, and vegetables, with a cup or two of his favourite beverage, *sew-heng-tsow*\* presented hot; and he ends his repast with boiled rice, which he eats with salt fish, or some other dish to give it zest. After this, tea is served up (in a covered cup, about the size of an English breakfast-cup,) on the leaves, without milk or sugar. Tea is always used thus by the richer classes. They drink the infusion before it be-

\* *Sew-heng-tsow* is a weak acidulated liquor, distilled from millet-seed, and always drunk hot. It is rather palatable, and rarely produces inebriation, though it excites the animal spirits.



comes too strong or bitter, and replenish the cup until the virtue of the leaves is quite exhausted.

Tea is the common beverage of all classes, and is always drunk warm, even in the hottest weather. Mechanics and labourers, who cannot afford to drink it as the rich do, on the leaves, draw it in an immense large block-tin tea-pot, cased with wood, and having cotton-wool put between the wood and the tea-pot, to preserve the heat longer. A spout protrudes from the wooden case, for convenience of pouring off the tea. Most Chinese love to drink their tea very hot—one of the causes, perhaps, that tend to produce the relaxation, weakness of digestion, and languor of nerve with which they are much afflicted.

At two o'clock p. m. another small repast is presented, accompanied with ripe fruits of the season; and again tea is drunk at the close. The principal meal in good society, however, is about five or six o'clock in the evening; and, if a ceremonious dinner, it must be made more acceptable to the guests by the accompaniment of a *sing-song* or play; and the whole entertainment seldom finishes before two or three in the



morning. Persons of strict regular habits finish at midnight.

The Chinese are so fond of smoking that they often use the pipe at intervals, whilst dining. Each person has his pipe-servant in waiting, and sometimes two; lads about fifteen to eighteen years of age, handsomely dressed, who light their pipe, and place it in the master's mouth without the trouble of his asking them, and as frequently as they know to be agreeable.

All the rich dress in costly silks and crapes, except in winter, when they wear fine broad cloth, lined with sea-otter's skins, or some other valuable furs.

When a Chinese invites to a ceremonious dinner, a large red paper is sent several days before the time. On this is written the invitation in the politest terms of the language. A set of the best actors are hired to perform before the guests, at the cost of from eighty to one hundred and twenty Spanish dollars for the night. Inferior actors may be had at twenty-five to thirty dollars; but, in the case I am supposing, the best are always engaged, unless the host be an avaricious man, who loves his wealth better than his guests. In summer a theatre,



composed of bamboos and covered with bamboo mats, is quickly erected before one of his garden-houses set apart for this purpose; but, if it be winter, the representation is given in the body of the largest house, where the family live. Before the stage several square tables are arranged in proportion to the number of guests, each accommodating four or six persons,\* the side opposed to the stage being kept open for the convenience of seeing the exhibition, at the same time that they regale their palates; and thus eyes, ears, and mouths are all occupied at once. The ears have the worst of it; for what they call music is an assemblage of discordant sounds, so loud and harsh as to excite the most disagreeable sensations.

Some of their humorous comedies are entertaining. I confess, however, that it requires some years of intimacy for one who does not understand the language perfectly, to comprehend all their pantomime; and even those who understand the language are often at a loss—so much is left to the imagination. The scene never changes; so that you must imagine that

\* The style of the *haut ton* in China is to have but three persons at each table, and sometimes only two!



the actor is gone to another apartment, or into the open air, the woods, to his bed, to ride on horseback, &c. &c. He makes a few signs, which signify that he opens a door, locks or unlocks it, steps into a boat, or a thousand other things, all of which the spectator must suppose that he is doing,—for no other indication but the actor's pantomime is presented.

Their tumblers, though accompanied by the harsh music already described, cannot fail to please, being vastly superior in skill and activity to all others. This is the only sort of dancing, (if it may be so called) known in China; and I have termed it dancing, because the tumblers have a clumsy sort of dance mixed with their tumbling. The gravity of the Chinese character cannot brook mere dancing. Those who have seen balls at Macao, expressed their disgust of them, and the more particularly, because the females were suffered to participate.

On the day before a feast, another invitation is sent to the guests, on rose-coloured paper, to remind them of it, and to ascertain whether they are coming. Again, on the next day, a short time before the hour appointed, the invitation is repeated, to inform them that the feast is prepared and awaits them.



When the guests are assembled, the first thing presented is warm almond milk, in large cups. Every table is served with exactly the same food and the same number of dishes, and at one and the same moment. The tables are mostly of polished ebony, or Surat black wood, and are double; for, as they use no table-cloths, the upper table is removed, with all that is on it, at the end of the first course, to give place to the second. For the first course the tables are laid out with *chopsticks*,\* wine-cups, China-ware, or enamelled spoons and stands, and two little plates with fruits, nuts, &c. Several small cold dishes, such as dry-salted flying fish, shred fine, and made into a sallad with mushrooms, &c. sausages cut into slices, gizzards and livers of fowls, boiled and hashed up with *sauce piquante*, cold ham sliced, salted ducks, eggs boiled and sliced, dried pork or venison, pounded fine and resem-

\* Two pieces of ebony or ivory, tipped with silver or plain, about nine inches long and quite round, except at the upper extremities which are sometimes square. They are held parallel to each other, under the thumb of the right hand against the fore and middle fingers, and the food, already cut up, is taken by squeezing the points together. A spoon is held in the left hand under them to receive the sauce, which otherwise would drop on the table.



bling oakum in appearance, but sweet to the taste, a kind of grub or worm found in the sugar-cane, fried crisp and much esteemed, with several other delicacies, are spread over the board, only leaving room, in the centre, for a cup about the size of a breakfast cup. The dinner now commences, and all the wine-cups are immediately filled with *Sew-heng-Tsow*, and the master of the feast rises, as well as all the guests; he holds the wine-cup in both hands, saluting them with it, after which they all drink together and sit down again. A cup with hot food is now served in the centre of every table, —the cold dishes mentioned before being considered as mere accompaniments to amuse the appetite at intervals, or in case any of the hot dishes are not to your palate.

Though grapes abound in China, they do not make wine of them. Some domestic liquors or cordials made from pine-apples, lychees, oranges, and other fruits, which they present at their feasts, although rather strong, are on the whole very palatable.

Those cordials, as well as a fiery empyreumatic liquor of an extremely disagreeable flavour, called *Fan-Tsow*, that must be, at least, fourth proof, are always offered after the commence-



ment of the second course. Cups of *Sew-heng-Tsow* are drunk as often as a new dish is served up. The first course consists generally of ragouts, fricasees, and stews of fowl, mutton, beef, pork, sweet ham, goose-feet, frogs, fish, quails, &c. &c. all cut up into small pieces, for the convenience of taking them with the *chop-sticks*, and served up in slow succession.

Besides the stated periods for drinking, the guests drink with one another occasionally, as in England. But when it is done ceremoniously, the parties rise from their chairs, with their wine-cups held in both hands, and proceed to the middle of the room. They then raise their cups as high as their mouths, and lower them again until they almost touch the ground—the lower the more polite. This process is repeated three, six, or nine times, each watching the other's motions with the greatest exactness; nor will one of them drink before the other, until, after repeated attempts, their cups meet their mouths at one and the same instant, when they empty them, and turn them up so as to expose the inside, and show that every drop has been drunk. After this, they hold the empty cups and salute one another in the same manner, retreating by degrees towards their chairs, when they sit down



to resume their functions at the repast. Here, sometimes, a polite contention takes place who shall be seated the first, and is not decided until after a number of ceremonious bows, nods, curvings of the bodies, and motions of the hands, when they contrive to lower themselves into their chairs at one and the same moment. At the commencement of this ceremony, when the parties approach one another, so as almost to touch their wine-cups, they very often exchange them before they begin their salutations.

They have also a game for making each other drink, which I shall endeavour to describe. The wine-cups being filled, the two persons engaged stretch forth their right hands towards the centre of the table, with their fingers closed. When the hands come almost in contact, they open as many fingers as they please, and each person cries out the number he opens, as one, three, five, &c. Whoever hits on the exact number of fingers presented by both persons, obliges his adversary to drink. I have seen this game continued for an hour, until one of the parties, finding himself the loser, and his head a little affected, is obliged to recede. It is an extremely noisy amusement when any number of guests engage in it. In passing up and down



Canton river, on a holiday, one's ears are assailed on all sides with this boisterous merriment, that savours strongly of the barbaric customs which prevailed at the feasts of our uncivilized ancestors.

China wine will not intoxicate unless drunk in very large quantities, or in conjunction with some of their strong domestic cordials, or the fiery *Fan-Tsow*. I must do the Chinese the justice to say they are a sober nation, and habitual inebriation is very rare indeed. It is to be regretted that we cannot give to them the same character for moderation as it regards other passions, which, if not so disgusting, are more criminal.

At table, it is thought polite to offer to your neighbour something from the dishes near you; and, if he be equally well-bred and expert, he will take it from your *chop-sticks* before you can place it on his spoon, and will immediately present you something in return.

One would think it were bad enough to eat *all* out of the same cup or dish, which is their custom; but to receive a piece of meat from the *chop-sticks* of a smoky-mouthed fellow, who has had them fifty times between his teeth, is to be



barbarously refined, and to carry politeness beyond the pale of common decency.

The first course is generally composed of from twelve to twenty dishes, independently of those between the first and second course; these are soups, served with pastry of various sorts, chiefly patties of minced meat, or sweet meats, some made of rice, others of flour. After the soups the first table is removed, with all that was on it. The remaining table is then spread with spoons, *chop-sticks*, wine-cups, vinegar, soy, and sweet sauce, with some little plates of sliced radishes, pears, oranges, and various other fruits and vegetables, placed before each person; and all the large fruits are sliced, as well as the vegetables.

Whilst the second course is preparing, those who are tired of sitting rise and walk about the room, a circumstance very agreeable to a European, who cannot fail to be fatigued with the tedious ceremony of a Chinese feast. The second table being prepared, the guests are all seated again, when *birds'-nest-soup*, the most expensive and the greatest delicacy a Chinese can offer, is served up with pigeons' or plovers' eggs floating on it, to each person. When entertaining any of the high constituted authorities, the mas-



ter of the feast puts the first dish of the second course on every table himself, as it is brought in by the servants. In the mean time, the cups are again filled with wine, the guests all stand up, nor do they seat themselves until the host, from the table where he is to sit, salutes them with his wine-cup, and drinks to them. They return the compliment, and then all sit down again to commence another feast, still more luxurious than the former. To make the birds' nest palatable, it is cooked in a very strong broth, by boiling and consuming the pounded flesh of fowls, a portion of which remains in it. There being neither salt nor pepper in the preparation of this dish, it would be quite insipid, were it not for the soy and vinegar at hand, which you can use at pleasure. Birds' nests are formed of a mucilage (supposed to be collected from certain weeds floating on the sea,) by the sea-swallows of the India, China, and Pacific Oceans. Some of the best come from Batavia, and the Nikobar Islands.

The *nest* is divided into three layers, distinguished by the name of *head*, *belly*, and *foot*. It is the last layer, very clean and white, forming the inside of the nest, that is called *head*; and, when separated from the rest, it forms a concave



stratum of an oval shape; about one quarter of an inch in thickness, and six inches in circumference, made by ingeniously connecting together little flat pieces of the substance, about seven-eighths of an inch wide, and two inches long. They are sold by weight, and the *catty*,\* of one pound three quarters English, of the *headsell* for the enormous price of forty-five to sixty Spanish dollars; *belly* sells at from twenty to thirty dollars the *catty*; and *foot*, the commonest and most impure, having sand, earth, &c. mixed with it, is worth from seven to twelve dollars the *catty*. After the bird's-nest soup, the rest of the dinner is served in large bowls resembling a slop bowl, in gradual succession to the number of twenty to thirty, and containing soups, ragouts, and stews of fish and meat of various kinds, but particularly *bearche-de-mar*,† shark's fins, fishes' maws, tortoise, crabs, shrimps, deers' sinews, partridges, quails, pheasants,

\* One hundred *catties* make a *pecul* of one hundred and thirty-three pounds and one-third English. A *pecul* is a Chinese weight equivalent to a natural load.

† *Bearche-de-mar* is a strong, stimulant, gelatinous marine substance, found among the sand-banks and archipelago of the Chinese Sea and the Pacific Ocean; but the great fishery of this kind is on the coast of New Holland.



ducks, sparrows, and rice-birds, &c. &c. Sometimes you will see a cup entirely of sparrows' heads! *Bearche-de-mar*, shark's fins, and fish-maws, are, after birds'-nest, the most esteemed, and cost from three quarters of a dollar to a dollar and a half the catty.

Towards the close, the last six or eight bowls are left on the table, formed into a circle, and, as the edges touch each other, on every two is placed a small plate with salted fish, salted ducks, eggs, and vegetables, variously cooked. In the centre of this circle is served a large tureen of black-tin, silver, or white copper, kept hot with spirits of wine or coals, containing soups, sour and plain, and boiled meats, disposed in different compartments. Then comes the rice, served in little cups to each guest, and with it are eaten the sour soup, salt fish, or, in fact, any of the dishes before you which please your palate. After all, tea is served up in covered cups, as before described, on the leaves, and without milk or sugar; and thus closes the entertainment.

As the principal ingredients in Chinese cooking are garlic and oil, and the latter sometimes of a strong rancid flavour, my readers will conclude, that if the foundation be so bad, the su-



perstructure must be worse. They have, however, a method of qualifying their garlic with steam, before it is put into the preparation; and this takes away almost all its strong flavour; while the rancid oil is only put into particular dishes. There are, therefore, amongst the enormous list presented to you, a number of good palatable dishes, and perhaps more wholesome than European ragouts, as they contain very little spice or pepper.—On the day following the feast, the host sends a large red paper to each of his guests, apologising for the badness of the dinner; and they answer him immediately on the same sort of paper, expressing, in the most exalted and extravagant terms, the pleasure and unbounded satisfaction his feast has afforded them. Those who invite Europeans generally lay aside a number of the ceremonies used with their own countrymen, and always inquire whether you will have a Chinese, or an English dinner. I have seen as good an English dinner at some of the hong merchants' tables as needs be, and accompanied with a very handsome dessert, and excellent wines of all sorts.



## CHAPTER VIII.

Low state of morality in China—Notions of religion—Multifarious application of the *bamboo*—Custom the criterion of conduct in China, rather than feeling—Reputation of Confucius—Deficiency of humane Institutions among the Chinese—Practice of exposing Children—Education in low life—Provincial diversities—General proneness to curiosity—Religious festivals and holidays—Feast of the new year—Traditions respecting the ten days kept sacred on that occasion.

FROM the description of their feasts it is easily perceived, that the Chinese indulge in the pleasures of the table, and sometimes to excess. I could wish there were no occasion to remark their being addicted to other more criminal indulgences, of a nature which debases them in the scale of human beings. But, in a country where morality is at its lowest ebb, and religion has no sincerity of devotion, being made up of mere rites, ceremonies, and ancient customs, the sensual appetites are unrestrained by any sentiment of moral or religious duties.



Notwithstanding the luke-warm attachment the Chinese shew for their religion, their hatred and enmity to every other that does not correspond with liberal polytheism, and the maxims of Confucius, are remarkable. Indeed, for intolerance, we may place the Chinese Government with the Japanese and the Mahomedans; although, upon a slight intercourse, the indifference exhibited by the nation generally to all religious matters, might induce a stranger to think otherwise.

Many of the excesses of the Chinese are punished by the instrumentality of the *bamboo*, a natural production of their country, and highly important in the administration of the laws, as well as useful, in an extraordinary degree, for various other purposes. It would be very blameable, were I to pass over this magic plant in silence, or neglect to explain to my readers all its properties and virtues. When it first pushes from the ground, it is quite soft, and is employed for food, stewed or boiled, as well as for making pickles and preserves. Having acquired its full growth, it is used for building houses and covering them, for making baskets mats, boats, ropes, cables, paper, masts for boats, yards for the sails of vessels of all sizes,



chairs, tables, and every sort of furniture, pumps, pipes, cylinders for aqueducts, hollow vessels of all descriptions for holding water, cups, tumblers, &c. &c. ! It is also the Emperor's vicegerent for conveying the effects of displeasure to his ministers—the dread of the nation—the father's prerogative—the husband's friend—the padagogue's assistant—and, consequently, it commands as much respect and obedience as the Emperor himself ! The most distinguished statesmen and warriors have been reprov'd by this uncouth messenger of the Imperial will, without, however, being disgraced ! In the hands of the constituted authorities, the fathers of families, and the masters of every trade, it may be said to be the guardian angel of the public weal, as well as the main support of the private police of the empire ; for a blow given by the Emperor to the highest Mandarin passes down in succession to the meanest man in China, just as the undulation of the waters of a lake, from any sudden concussion on the one shore, is gradually impelled onwards and felt at the other.

Where such an instrument of executive administration prevails, the point of honour, that noble and distinguished attribute of every gen-



tleman, cannot exist; for, if there be no criterion of personal disgrace, the human mind becomes abject, and submits to every species of degradation. We cannot wonder, then, that venality and vice of every kind are so prevalent in China.

A Chinese, who performs certain rites and ceremonies, is obedient to his parents, or, if they should be dead, pays regularly his annual adorations at their tomb, believes all other crimes light in proportion to the neglect of those sacred duties, and thinks any thing may be atoned for by propitiating the inferior deities to intercede for him. They seem to have no notion of moral duties, in a strict sense; and the few they practise are merely for the sake of conforming with ancient ceremonies and customs, without knowing or regarding the principles on which they were founded. Some of the most immoral men I met with were great lovers of Confucius, and could repeat all his maxims by heart!

The principles of that celebrated philosopher are perfectly well adapted to the pliant virtue of his countrymen; or else they use the specious logic, for which they are so famous, for explaining them to suit their own convenience. Learned Doctors of law and justice in that country



expound them after the same manner, and prove right wrong, or black white, whenever they chuse to exert their eloquence. Where the judge and jury exist in one and the same personage, it is no more than fair to conclude, that some motive more powerful than that of exhibiting their eloquence, actuates them, and gives a bias to their opinions.

I have endeavoured, by some of my remarks, to show, that we have in Europe very false notions of the Chinese government and nation; that they are not so civilized, wise, and good, as their panegyrists have represented them, and are greatly inferior to us in politics, science and morals, the fine arts, and those liberal and noble national institutions for which the Christian world has been long since famed.

There is not in China a single humane institution that I have heard of, except the Imperial Granaries for supplying the poor with rice, in times of scarcity, at the usual price. Motives of policy would always indicate this kind of accommodation, as being necessary to prevent revolts, which, notwithstanding, frequently happen when there is a famine; for venality has robbed even these most necessary institutions of their utility and value to the



nation. Corrupt Mandarins often take advantage of the power in their hands, to enrich themselves at the expence of the poor; and though this conduct invariably produces a revolt, in which they lose their lives, it does not seem to deter others from following their bad example.

The poorer classes at Canton, I presume from extreme poverty, very often expose children in the streets as soon as they are born, and although there are persons who make it their business to preserve children exposed in this way, they are sometimes eaten by the dogs, before these persons find them.

These classes educate their boys for comedians, and the girls for prostitution, two of the most profitable employments in that country; but they are not allowed to retain them above a certain number of years. I have been told by the Chinese, that it was formerly the practice, even of the rich, to strangle the female children at their birth, after a certain number, as it was considered a disgrace to have too many of them. In the province of Fokien, there seems little doubt but it was practised, though perhaps not generally throughout China.

The manners, customs, and the pronunciation of the language are different throughout in the several provinces; nor can a



Canton man, and a person from Chinchoo understand each other, without an interpreter,—unless it be on paper, the written language being the same every where. In the streets of Canton, the Nankin, Quansy, and Fokien men are easily distinguished by their costume from the crowd about them. They are often seen in groups, loitering about the factories to get a look at a *Fan-Qui*, and when they meet him in the streets, they give him a wide passage to pass, and stare at him as they would at a wild beast; but should they muster up courage enough to come near to him, they examine him with a degree of curiosity bordering on impertinence. I once saw a Fokien man take hold of an Englishman's ear, and push it forward to see how it was fastened to his head.

Indeed, the Chinese generally are extremely curious, and, if possible, more fond than the French and English of looking at public executions. They even go so far as to cause to be imitated, and exhibited at their theatres, all the most horrid punishments invented by the fertile minds of those who compose the penal code; and those always appear to afford pleasure to the spectators. I have seen the representation of a person dipt into a cauldron of



boiling oil, whose body was covered with a substance that came away at the touch, in the same manner as it might be supposed the skin would peel off after such a horrible process! It was so ingeniously and dexterously managed, that it had all the effect of reality; and although I could not help admiring the cleverness of the performers, I felt a profound disgust at the exhibition, and at the barbarous taste of a Chinese audience.

The worship of *Budha-Foe*, as it is called at Canton, is allowed; but it appears to be mixed with deism and polytheism, as the reader will perceive by the following account of the festivals, temples, gods, &c. which I hope may at least prove amusing, for I have had much trouble in collecting the materials, and embodying and arranging them, so as to render them clear and intelligible. They have been gathered from several sources, as I have never yet found amongst all my Chinese acquaintances, any one *man* who could give me ample instruction on this interesting subject. I have never met with a Chinese who was governed by fixed and solid principles of religion, such as the Christian faith, produced by the conviction of certain celestial truths, on the minds of Europeans. A Chinese, as I have stated, has a sacred and superstitious respect for



certain ceremonies, rites, and ancient customs, which have prevailed for ages, without having the slightest knowledge of the principles and dogmas on which they are founded. Although their polytheism is said to be imported from India, it certainly is of a milder and less superstitious cast than that which prevails there; having been modified, no doubt to suit the genius of the nation; for the rigid practices of many of the Indian sects would have made no proselytes in China. The religion of the Chinese may be fairly compared to their dress, loose, light and gaudy, flattering the eyes, and covering with its ample folds a number of defects and impurities.

As they calculate by the moons, although the year consists of twelve months, it does not bring out the time correctly, and they fill up the vacancy with a number of holidays; and, after every nineteen years, there are seven years with thirteen months in each. From the moment the new year commences, all classes and descriptions of people, high and low, rich and poor, attend to nothing but pleasure, visiting the temples, and theatres, and feasting. The previous business of the old year, public and private, whether between the government or individuals, must be settled and adjusted to the



satisfaction of all parties, before the first day of the new year. For a certain number of days, the power of the Mandarins is suspended, which gives occasion to some excesses, the people being left to settle their accounts, &c. according to *ancient custom*. This is often highly inconvenient and unpleasant, both to debtor and creditor, but perhaps less so, and certainly less expensive, than to have to do with the Mandarins. But it is no more than justice to say, that although entirely left to themselves, they settle matters more amicably than one would, at first, be inclined to suppose. If a debtor cannot pay all, the creditor must be satisfied with as much as he is able to pay, and receive an obligation for the remainder, bearing interest, according to agreement. Should there be no money, and also a refusal to come to accommodation, the creditor proceeds to acts of violence, sends persons to live in the debtor's house, breaks his furniture, and beats him if he can catch him; unless, as it sometimes happens, the debtor and his party prove too strong for the assailants, and drive them off the ground. This bustle continues, and frequent attacks are made, until the last day of the old year: then the creditor ceases to trouble the



debtor until another year has expired, when he attacks him again, unless they should have made some sort of arrangement together in the mean time. Sometimes a creditor hires beggars, lepers, and others afflicted with loathsome diseases, to sit at the entrance of the debtor's house, and by this annoyance forces him to a settlement.

These disagreeable people he can only get rid of by bribing the *Beggär-Mandarin* higher than his creditor; for it is not allowable by law to beat or abuse a beggar, though the Mandarin will always punish them for a trifle, when it is required.

The feast of the new year is called *Sun-Neen*, and is celebrated at the four corners of the city, in the following temples : *Shing-Sy-Pack-Thai*, or the western temple of the Great Northern God ; *Sylo-yam-thai-wong*, or the great Temple of the Chinese Esculapius ; *Pou-chen Tsee-sy-kail-sheing-whong*, or Temple of the tutelary deity of Canton ; *Sy-whong-kai-yoke-whong-ma-yen*, or Temple sacred to medicine and the healing art. The ground about these temples is said to possess the property of preserving dead bodies, so as to prevent putrefaction, until the flesh, consuming by degrees, turns to dust, while the skin and bones remain perfect. At each of these Temples, there is a large thea-



tre erected, made of bamboos (and pulled down the moment the festivals are over), where plays are performed in honour of the gods, and for the amusement of the public. On this day, also, every house must be furnished with new lanterns, and with new red papers, pasted over the doors, over the *penates*, or household gods, &c. and the family all dressed in new clothes. In fact, every thing but the furniture, and other solid, permanent, and useful objects, which it is unnecessary to change, are renewed.

A Chinese, no matter how poor, strains every nerve to purchase something new on that auspicious day, which course ancient prejudice and superstition has taught him to believe is absolutely necessary to insure his good fortune for the coming year. If he cannot borrow or beg, he will steal sooner than neglect the accomplishment of his purpose. All accounts, debts, &c. are supposed to be settled before twelve o'clock on the night of the last day of the old year; and, the moment that hour arrives, every principal or master of a family of every degree, in proportion to his means, fires off a quantity of crackers and other fireworks, at his door, to shew that he has arranged all his business happily, and to salute the new year with joy. During that night, all



Canton, and, I may say, all China, is in an uproar with the noise of the crackers, which are their favourite firework. At every Mandarin's house, also, there is an immense string of crackers hung up on a long red pole, and fired off,—the noise of which is tremendous, and continues sometimes, (if a very large string,) for ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour.

In China, crackers are constantly let off, on all joyful occasions, to propitiate the gods, or compliment their friends on their arrival or departure, on birth-days, marriages, &c.—and strangers are heartily tired of them during the holidays. At the new year, it is considered a duty to visit all their friends and relations ceremoniously, the visitors being dressed out in new clothes, rich and elegant in proportion to their fortune and rank in life. A rich man, on this occasion, receives his company in his hall of audience newly decorated; the chairs are all hung with red cloth, the furniture newly polished, and the servants in waiting dressed in their best attire. He sits on a couch, at the upper end of the hall; and, on either hand, are placed two rows of arm-chairs for the guests, who are introduced through the large folding doors immediately opposite, to the sound of *gongs*—copper



instruments three to four feet in circumference, resembling the detached bottom of a cauldron, and beaten with sticks, that have balls of cloth at the ends. They produce a loud, deep, sonorous, and not unpleasant tone. When a guest approaches, the gongs are beaten with violence, the folding doors fly open, and, as he enters, the host, with quickened step, advances to meet him. A number of bows, salutations, ceremonies, flexures of the body, compliments, &c. &c. pass between them, as they slowly proceed up the hall; and, if the guest be of distinction, ten minutes at least elapse before the parties are seated, and himself placed at the side of the host, on the couch; but, if an ordinary visitor, he takes one of the chairs. Near each chair is a small black-wood table, the centre inlaid with marble, on which are immediately placed tea and sweetmeats. The guest and the master of the house are served with a cup of tea, at one and the same instant, which the host sips in compliment to his guest, taking care first to salute him ceremoniously beforehand. When the guest departs, another long series of ceremonies and compliments takes place, and he returns to the folding doors, to the same music; the host accompanying him, complimenting and bowing, nor quitting him



until he is fairly seated in his sedan-chair, and borne off by his servants. Oftentimes, the host calls after his visitor, who is seen thrusting his head out of the sedan-chair to return the parting compliment.

The new-year festival, by law, lasts ten days; but old custom, more sacred than law, prolongs it with many to fifteen days; and the idle and profligate continue it for a month.

The first day is called *Kei*, or *Kei-yat*, or *Fowl's day*, intimating that birds are the principal food of man; but, as he is said to have lived formerly almost entirely on vegetables, no animal food is consumed on that day by those who keep it rigidly, nor, indeed any food whatever, until after twelve o'clock at night. There is a superstition prevalent in China, that it is unlucky to use bells or brooms on a new year's day: therefore care should be taken that the house is swept clean previously, and that any Chinese who live with Europeans either hide their masters' bells, or take the clappers of them away, lest they should sound them.

The second day is called *Bow-yat*, or *dog's day*, being kept sacred in honour of the fidelity of a dog to one of their great men, who was so virtuous that, after his death, he was deified.



As he was also very rich, a friend of his, who coveted his wealth, had determined to poison him; but, knowing what a faithful guardian he had in his dog, he tried to poison the animal first. This sagacious beast, however, discovered the poison by the smell, and not only refused the food in which it was mixed, but was exasperated at the traitor, and killed him on the spot. After hearing this story, I was much surprised that many of the Chinese should eat dogs. Carpenters and joiners are the persons, in Canton, most fond of dog's flesh.

The third day is called *Cheu-yat*, or *pig's day*, and is kept sacred on account of a pig educated by a priest, who possessed the sacred book of rites. This book was deposited in a temple that took fire, and it would have been consumed, had not the *learned pig*, who perceived the imminent danger to which it was exposed, run and took it in his mouth, and conveyed it through the flames, to a place of safety. On this day, no pork is eaten by those who keep it strictly; but, on other days, it is the *sine quâ non* of a Chinese dinner. With all their respect for the specific pig that saved the sacred book, they slay his brethren most unmercifully; and I believe there is more pork eaten in China than



in all the rest of the world put together. The person who related to me the fable of the pig, asked me if I knew how Europeans became possessed of the twenty-four letters composing their alphabet. I answered him in the negative, when he informed me of what his chronicles say on the subject: "A Chinese who was accustomed, when he walked, to take a book for his amusement, went once some distance into the woods, where he stopped to read and rest himself. Finding himself fatigued, he put the book down on the ground, and placed a stone on it, whilst he lay down to repose himself. After a while, he got up and went home, but forgot the book. It remained there for several years, until every part was decayed, except twenty-four characters covered by the stone. These a monkey afterwards found, and, not being able to read them, he presented them to the Europeans, who formed their language with them." This story, ridiculous as it is, shews the vanity and pride of the Chinese, and the contempt they have for Europeans. My Chinese friend seemed vexed to see me burst into a hearty fit of laughter, and to hear me ask him if it was possible he could believe such an absurd tale? He said, "why not? My country possesses very ancient books



written by the wisest men who ever lived; so far back," said he, "that I can doubt nothing they have written. Besides, do you know that monkeys can speak if they like? but they will not before men, as they are fearful of being made slaves by them!" On inquiry afterwards, I found the latter to be a vulgar opinion in China, as well as a thousand others of the most absurd and superstitious cast. Some of my Chinese acquaintances, who appeared sensible men in other respects, gave implicit belief to fables and stories too childish and extravagant to repeat. Our whole list of ghosts, fairies, witches, hobgoblins, and magic—is nothing to what China has produced, for, where every thing is believed, the shadow of truth is not preserved, and their fables are as preposterous as their fancies. I ought to have mentioned that, sometimes, when a child is very ill of the small pox, a pig is sent as a present to the temple to propitiate the gods. Pigs presented in this manner are considered sacred, and are kept clean, and fed with the best food, until they die a natural death.

The fourth day is named *Yaong-yat*, or *Sheep's day*, in honour of *Poon-Quoo-Whong*, who first discovered the utility of the sheep. They represent him as having been a very poor man,



who was covered with mats, and ate raw vegetables for a number of years, before he knew the use of fire. There is a temple erected to him, where sweet cakes, wine, and fruits are the only offerings placed at his shrine.

The fifth day is *New-yat*, or *Cow's day*. The history of this festival is, that a woman called *Sham-Shee* had lost her husband and all her family, except an infant son at the breast: and her sole property was a cow. This unhappy female, after losing her friends and relations, became melancholy, fell sick, and died, leaving her helpless infant without any protection whatever. Filled with compassion at this poor child's situation, the cow used to come daily at certain intervals, to lie down by it, and suckle it. She took such good care of the child, that he grew rapidly to manhood; was of enormous stature, possessed great strength and courage, and, through his great prowess, was at length made a Mandarin. In his prosperity, he never forgot the cow that suckled him, but always fed her with his own hand, before eating himself, —and instituted this festival in honour of her. Many of the Chinese, from their great respect for this animal, will not eat beef; and others, at forty years of age, leave off the use of it



until their death, from a belief that the continuance of it would prevent their going to heaven! I may here remark, that at that age, likewise, they let their mustachios grow, and at fifty their beards, though many from choice wear both much sooner, particularly those who marry at an early age, and have sons grown up to manhood. A man who does not wear his mustachios at forty, or his beard at fifty, is laughed at for his vanity, in endeavouring to appear younger than his real age. Almost all the Chinese smoke to excess: and should any one amongst them refuse to smoke, he is accused of affectation, as they deem it necessary that every man should make a chimney of his mouth.

The sixth day, called *Ma-yat*, or *horse-day*, is kept in honour of the horse, to teach the Chinese to respect the noble character and useful qualities indefatigably employed by that animal for the benefit of man.

On the seventh day is the festival called *Yun-yat*, or *Man's-day*, in honour of the celebrated sage *Pone-Tso*, who was deified, and has a temple erected to him. He first taught the Chinese their domestic economy, the use of rice, and many vegetables, to which he gave names, as well as to different animals, pointing out those best adapted for food, and



those for labour. They say also, that he lived upon grass till he made these discoveries. Only wine, water, and fruits are offered at his temple.

The eighth day, called *Ko-yat*, or *grain-day*, is another festival in honour of *Pone-Tso*, being the anniversary of the day on which he discovered that invaluable article of food so much used in China, and being solemnized out of gratitude for a gift so necessary to the support of life. Millions of people in that country eat very little else but grain, many being so very poor as not to be able to purchase every day meat or fish to give it zest.

Another of *Pone-Tso's* festivals is the ninth day, *Ma-yat*, or *Flax-day*, celebrated in honour of his discovery of the use of this material. Many other discoveries are ascribed to his fertile genius; and those who wish to excel in, or have met with good fortune in the prosecution of any of the mechanic arts, present offerings to propitiate him, or to express gratitude for his protection.

The tenth day is named *Thow-yat*, in honour of *peas* and *beans*, and their first cultivator, who was also *Pone-Tso*. He is represented as having been the wisest man ever known, having lived to the extraordinary age of eight hundred years, and combined the wisdom of Solomon with the



longevity of Methusaleh. There are many other of his discoveries; in fact, all the most useful inventions are said to have emanated from the prolific brain of this celebrated sage.



## CHAPTER IX.

The first month of the Chinese year, and its festivals—  
 Second month—Offerings made to the shades of the departed—Third month—Feast of the lanterns—*Sing-Songs*, or plays—Fourth month—The floral God, *Sam-Kay*—Fifth month—Honours paid to the God *Chai-Kong*—Achievements attributed to him—Sixth month—Festival of the goddess *Koon-Yam*—Her attributes—Seventh month—Six female Deities—Eighth month—Homage paid to the Moon—Ninth month—Kite flying—Tradition of the two Kings—Offerings to *Wha-Quong*, the God of fire—Tenth month—Its celebration usually deferred through jealousy of the Foreigners—Inferior deities—Homage of the Merchants—Eleventh month—Festival in honour of *Thai-Sooy*—Twelfth month.

The first month of the year is called *Yat-Yuet*.\* It comprises the festivals already described, and, in fact, is itself a festival from beginning to end, as many of the Chinese keep

\* In this month there is a festival kept by thieves, in honour of a famous robber, who made his escape from prison by an extraordinary stratagem, and afterwards became a great Mandarin.



up the new yearly sports until the conclusion of it.

Next comes the second month, or *Yee-Yuet*, the most important, as being set apart for that most sacred duty of offering their adorations at the tombs of their deceased parents and relatives. An offering to the shade of departed relatives consists of rice, fish, fowls, pork, vegetables, cakes, &c. together with the first fruits ripe in that month. Small red candles, called *lap-chocks*,\* are lighted, and stuck round the tomb, and gilt or silver paper burnt over it. The oldest son, or nearest relation, heads the party, and stands near the tomb; the rest of the family keeping behind him, and following his example. During the ceremony, they frequently fall on their knees, and knock their foreheads three, six, or nine times against the earth, imploring the protection of their defunct friends, and praying also for their peace and happiness in the other

\* *Lap-chocks* are candles about three inches long, fixed to a thin round splint of fir, the upper part of which is covered with cotton wool, and, penetrating the candle, serves for the wick. The outerskin of the candle is composed of red wax, and the inside of tallow. They are very convenient, as the end of the stick below the candle can be stuck in the ground, and therefore may be used without a candlestick.



world. A small portion of each offering is scattered over the tomb; the remainder, if the persons are rich, is left for the poor; but if not, they regale themselves with it.

*Sam - Yuet* is the name of the third month, in which is the highly esteemed celebrated festival *Choot-Neen-Tseen*, or *the feast of the Lanterns*. Lanterns are exhibited of all sorts and shapes, resembling reptiles, birds, fishes and various animals. The populace light them up at night, and parade the streets with them in procession. I have seen an immense dragon composed of lanterns, not less than one hundred yards in length, brought before the factories on men's shoulders, and managed so as to imitate, in the most exact manner, the movement of a serpent with a flaming mouth. There is a number of public *sing-songs*, or plays, performed in the streets, on bamboo theatres, erected purposely, in honour of the names, or deeds of several heroes and demigods whose anniversaries happen in this month. Splendid processions also take place, where several young girls are exhibited in rich and fantastic costumes, said to represent certain heroes or deities. They stand on small platforms, borne on men's shoulders, visit all the rich merchants and shopkeepers, and collect money for the



priests of the temple of the great Northern God, called *Thai-Pack*.\* In proportion to the abundance or scarcity of the crops of rice, are the splendor and richness of the lanterns. If rice be plentiful, the people are overjoyed, and shew their gratitude to heaven for this invaluable blessing, by the gorgeous decorations, variety and beauty of their lanterns.

*Tsee-Yeut*, or the fourth month, is the one in China that corresponds in beauty of season with the month of May in Europe, when re-animated nature covers the trees and meadows with a lively verdure, and scatters around all her most beautiful and odoriferous blossoms and flowers, to charm and regale the senses. They have, therefore, a grand festival in honor of the god *Sam-Kay*, who is worshipped as the god of flowers and vegetation, and whose attributes, except sex, strongly resemble those of Flora in the Grecian mythology. There is a fine temple erected to him; and flowers, fruits, cakes, and

\* The females employed on this occasion are courtezans, hired for the purpose, and it is only at such exhibitions, that even those are admitted. All the female characters at their theatres are represented by boys, dressed in women's clothes; it being against the laws for a woman to appear on the stage.



fowls are offered at his shrine. During three successive days, plays are performed in a theatre built before his temple for the public amusement.

The fifth month is called *Ung-Yuet*. In this month, there is a grand festival in honour of the God *Chai-Kong*, to whom they are grateful for having destroyed a large voracious animal called *Gnoke-yew*, which, according to their description, resembled a crocodile, and had devoured a vast number of the inhabitants. This God prepared an immense ball of rice for the creature as a bait, inclosing in the middle of it sharp pieces of iron, nails &c., having swallowed which, he was killed. The festival commences on the anniversary of that day, the fifth day of the fifth month, celebrated on the water, in boats called by the Chinese *Lang-chu*, and by Europeans snake or dragon boats. These contain from forty to eighty men each, are long, but very narrow, having only room enough for two men to sit abreast, are impelled by paddles at either side, are beautifully painted, gilded and adorned with flags, and represent in form an immense serpent, the head and neck elevated three or four feet above the surface of the water. In the centre there is a very large drum, which is beaten by two men, and the



paddles are moved regularly to the sound of the drum. Their principal amusement with these boats is running races with each other, at particular parts of the river, where an immense crowd of spectators are assembled in flower-boats, sampans, &c. forming an extremely diversified, novel, and beautiful picture. To a stranger this is the most pleasing and entertaining of all the Chinese festivals, because it is exhibited on the river, where he has ample space to behold it, and he sees the women, as well as the men of all classes and descriptions, who come thither in their flower-boats to witness the spectacle.\* The people of the snake boats, if they attempt to turn too quickly, in their eagerness to win the race, are upset; but, as the Chinese are all excellent swimmers, they soon turn the boats up, bale them, and proceed on again, as if nothing had happened.

The sixth month is called *Loke-Yuet*. In this month occurs the famous festival of the Goddess *Koon-Yam*, protectress of females and children, who is worshipped on the 19th day

\* It is only at this time, and at a fête given in February at the *Fatee* gardens, above Canton, on the right bank of the river, that the Chinese women of all classes are allowed to appear in public.



of the month. She is also one of the *Penates*, or household Goddesses of China, and is said to have conquered a devil, who always first appeared in the form of a boy, but had the power of changing his shape, at pleasure, into that of some ferocious wild beast; which power he practised to destroy the inhabitants. She subjected him to her service, by placing an iron ring over his head that possessed a magic quality, resisting his attempts to free himself; and he was consequently forced to obey her commands. After conquering this devil, she obtained from him the power of changing herself into one hundred and eight different shapes! As she generally employs these Proteus tricks to the best purposes, the Chinese have erected a temple to her, on a mountain that overlooks Canton, where thousands of people of both sexes, but more particularly women, go to pay their adorations at her shrine on the 19th of the month; and on that day women eat no animal food. This Goddess is represented with a swallow in her hand, being the protectress of that bird, which comes in the sixth month. Whoever should be rash enough to destroy a swallow, would inevitably be punished by her displeasure! There is not, in the whole list of the



Chinese polytheism, a deity who appears to command more respect, both from men and women.

The name of the seventh month is *Tsat-Yuet*. On the 7th day of this month six female deities are supposed to descend from Heaven to wash themselves in the rivers of China, in order to purify the water, and render it wholesome and palatable. The Chinese believe that if, on the third watch of the night of that day, a jar or any other vessel be filled with river water, it will never spoil; but it must be done at the moment indicated, whilst the deities are bathing, else it will not possess the expected virtue. These six deities are supposed to come from the constellation of the Pleiades; and the seventh of the number, not being visible to the naked eye, is imagined to be married and unable to accompany her sisters, who are all virgins, and who descend in a mist to visit the rivers on midsummer-night. This account has somewhat of coincidence with their history in the Grecian mythology, where they are also represented as females.

The eighth month is called *Pate-Yuet*. On the 15th day of the moon is the famous festival *Chung-Tsow* (generally the commence-



ment of the cold weather), in honour of the chaste Cynthia, who witnesses the consumption of enormous quantities of silvered and gilt paper, only so called,—for copper and tin are used, instead of these precious metals. At the festival, this material is employed to propitiate her smiles. There are likewise presented to her a variety of cakes, sweetmeats, and vegetables, but particularly yams, which are considered as immediately under her benign protection. Part of the ceremony consists in making cakes of various sorts and shapes, and sending them as presents to friends, handsomely arranged in baskets.

Next comes *Bow-Yuet*, or the ninth month. In this month the north east monsoon generally blows fresh, and the principal amusement is to fly kites against the *Pak-Fong*, as it is called. These the Chinese make in a very ingenious manner, to resemble birds, fishes, snakes, centipedes, &c. They have, generally, a very thin strip of the bamboo cane, tied to a bow, across the head of the kite; and, when elevated in the air, it vibrates to the wind and produces a sound resembling the twanging of a bow-string. The Chinese imagine it expresses the word *Foo-awne*. Many years before China was governed



by a single emperor, there were two kings who were near neighbours, one a very virtuous man, and the other very wicked. The wicked king, after many schemes, contrived to get the good one into his possession, and immediately imprisoned him, with the determination of killing him. On the night previous to the execution of his intention, (the 7th day of the ninth month,) the north wind blew with great violence, and, as he listened to it, he heard distinctly in every blast the word *fang* or *beware!* Also, when he arose in the morning, he found the good king's name engraved in large characters on the ground, and, considering these omens as a threat from Heaven, he became alarmed, and gave him his liberty. Flying of kites with the bow to make them sing *Fang*, the name of the good king, is considered as celebrating his escape. They also fly kites to deprecate the wrath of the great God of fire *Wha-Quong*, called by others *Fo-Shan*. This God is represented of gigantic stature and immense force, with three goggle eyes! Offerings are made to him by illuminations of lamps of various sorts and colours, large quantities of meat, fish, fruits, &c. and burning great heaps of silver and gilt paper (so called) marked with the names of those



who adore him. Many perform these ceremonies in boats on the rivers, which are adorned with variously coloured lanterns, and beat gongs whilst they pass to and fro. Of a dark night they are very beautiful and entertaining objects. The 7th of the month is the day when they worship *Wha-Quong*, whom Europeans have sometimes (from misunderstanding what the Chinese relate in bad English) thought to be the devil. Those Chinese who know a little English, make use of the word devil to explain their idea of a deity whose power they dread, and who often, in that country, where fires are rarely quenched by human aid, seems to do an immense deal of mischief. They, therefore, make enormous sacrifices to him to satisfy his appetite, and prevent him from consuming their property. This festival is particularly attended to by the rich, who lay before the God splendid tables covered with food of all descriptions, which, at the close, is abandoned to their servants and the poor.

The tenth month is called *Tung-chee-shap-Yuet*. Although many festivals are ordered to be celebrated in this month by the Chinese calendar, the Mandarins of Canton do not allow them, in consequence of the number of strangers



who arrive there at that season. - They are always postponed until the fifth month of the next year, when the strangers go away, and there is less danger of riots and disputes taking place, of which they are extremely fearful. It would appear the Government itself gives no public festivals,\* nor any thing whatever to amuse the populace. All the festivals I have endeavoured to describe are religious ones given in cities by the temples and parishes, (which support them in honour of their Gods) and in the country, after the same manner, by the hamlets, villages, and temples. Subscriptions are raised amongst all classes and descriptions of people, who give, according to their means, to persons appointed purposely. It is considered a great disgrace to refuse your mite on those solemn occasions. On the 25th of the tenth month, the Chinese imagine the inferior gods, who have been sent down to earth to inhabit the temples and watch over mankind, return to Heaven to

\* Sometimes the viceroy, governor, and other great officers, as well as rich individuals, give plays at the bamboo theatres, erected before their houses in the streets, which every one sees that pleases; but I could not learn that any were given by the government expressly to amuse the people.



render in an account of their labours to the great *Joss-Yook-Chee*, or Supreme Being. They remain in Heaven to enjoy themselves until the 15th day of the new year, when they are obliged to return again to earth, and resume their functions at the several temples, according to their destinations. During their absence from earth, the temples are, consequently, all repaired, if necessary, cleaned, and washed, red papers, and the insignia, &c. renewed, the sacred implements cleaned and polished by the priests, and, in fact, every thing arranged in the nicest order for their reception. Should the priests neglect this most important duty, the gods are supposed to become exceedingly angry; to break the roof or walls, or visit the temple with sickness, or some dreadful calamity. However, the priests generally attend religiously to this business, and make their temples as clean and as attractive as possible. This is the month also when merchants who are fortunate in commerce pay their adorations at the shrine of *Tsoy-Pack-Sing-Quan*, a god whose attributes, as nearly as I could discover, seem to correspond with those of Mercury in the heathen mythology, except that he is not also the God of Thieves.



*Shap-Yat-Yuet* is the name of the eleventh month, on the 21st of which there is always a grand festival in honour of the god *Thai-Sooy*, protector of the crops, who corresponds in every thing, except sex, with the Ceres of the Greeks. At this period the second crop of rice, generally the best and most abundant, is cut down. Cakes of new rice are made in every family, and, accompanied with roasted ducks, pigs, and geese, are sent as presents to friends and relations. Two very large wooden bowls of rice are boiled and presented to the god, part of the contents being scattered about in his presence; and the ceremony closes by cleaving the air with bamboos. It is supposed that, on account of the very great utility of the bamboo, this god is as fond of it as the Emperor himself; and he is considered as the all-powerful protector of agriculture. There is a temple built for him, wherein his statue is seen holding a bamboo in one hand, and a plough in the other, drawn by a single buffalo; and he has one foot without a shoe. Sometimes he is represented driving a buffalo without a plough. Should any one, either in his sleeping or waking dreams or visions (for they have both in China), have the misfortune to receive a visit from him, with both his shoes on, the season



will certainly be too dry, and the crops of rice will fail !

The twelfth month is named *Shap-Yee-Yuet*, and has also its festivals, which it is perhaps needless here to describe, as I have already given so much detail on this subject.



## CHAPTER X.

Chinese notions of the deluge and the creation—Ideas of the Supreme Being—Attributes of *Pach-Thai*, the protector of cities—Minor Deities subsidiary to him—Mode of supporting the priesthood—Monasteries—Religious Sects—Hostility shewn to the Christian faith—Chinese notions of a future state—Office and influence of the *Shing-Shang*—Ceremonies attendant on courtship and marriage—Funeral customs.

THE Chinese appear to relate the history of the deluge and the creation of the world nearly as we have it, except that they represent the remnant of the human species as having been saved on a mountain in China; and their country, from this circumstance, is considered by them the highest of the globe. They believe in a Supreme and Omnipotent Being, called the *Great Joss*, or *Yook-Chee*, represented only to the mind, and not allowing his image to be made on earth; and they say, should any one be rash enough to make a statue of him, he would be immediately struck dead. He is, however, described on paper, holding the little finger of his



right hand across the first joint of the middle finger, the fore-finger resting on the point of the little finger, and the third finger bent round it, whilst the thumb is also bent upwards; a very curious and difficult position to place the fingers in. They believe, that when he opens his hand the world and all the human race are to be destroyed. He created the globe perfectly round and smooth. In his left hand he holds a large wand, the end resting on the toes of the right foot. With this wand, it is said, he struck the globe, and, at a single blow, disposed the mass into the irregular, but agreeable form now presented to our eyes, of mountains, plains, seas, rivers, rocks, forests, &c. Besides the deities sent by him to inhabit the temples, he has twelve vicegerents, whom he sends to every part of China annually, to protect it from famine, pestilence, and other great calamities. They are directed, however, to neglect those parts where the people are very vicious; who, when those deities cease to watch over them, are sure to be punished with some dreadful misfortune. Formerly temples were erected to *Yook-Chee*, adorned with his statue, at which he became greatly displeased, and destroyed them with thunder and lightning; since when no one has dared to build a temple for him,



or make his statue. His greatest vicegerent, however, *Pack-Thai*, the protector of every large city, has always a splendid temple and a gigantic statue. He is represented sitting, his right arm bent round as high as his breast, his fingers crooked, somewhat after the manner of *Yook-Chée*, and on the points of them a child seated. The left arm is a-kimbo; his hair floats loose; under his right foot he confines a green snake, and under his left foot a tortoise. He was so virtuous a man that *Yook-Chée* thought proper to deify him, at the age of thirty six years, and confide to him the care and protection of mortals. When young, a green snake and a tortoise were his favourite animals and companions. His mother, washing herself in a lake, was drowned, and drawn by a duck to shore, where she was found. In going to search for her, he passed under a mandarin \* orange-tree, in the branches of which he entangled his hair, and was obliged to untie it to extricate himself. This is the reason why he is represented with his hair loose and dishevelled. When adoration is paid to him, the offering consists of ducks,

\* The best species of orange is very large, and rather flat, and the skin stands off from the fruit. These are called mandarin-oranges. I have seen some of them ten or twelve inches in circumference.



mandarin-oranges, meats of different kinds, fish, rice, fruits, tea, and wine.

*Pack-Thai* has eight inferior gods in his train, who are supposed to obey him implicitly; namely, the god of rain, *Whan-Yune-Shui*; *Luec-Long*, the god of thunder; the goddess of lightning, a virgin of twenty-five years, who never grows older nor loses her beauty, called *Sheem-Thien-Yeung-Mow*; *Fong-Shaw*, the god-protector of the crops from mildew, worms, &c; the god of seas, lakes, and rivers; *Low-Chach*, the god of dreams; *Mong-Shaw*, the god of winds, also called *Fong-Shan*; and the god of women in labour, who is supposed to keep an exact register of the births and deaths of the human race. *Whan-Hune-Shui*, the god of rain, is represented walking on wheels, to shew the facility with which he visits all parts of the earth, and swinging a handkerchief in either hand, one red and the other green. With the green handkerchief he is supposed to moisten the earth; and with the red one to soak up the superfluous water. All the remaining gods have likewise their several attributes and servants; but these have nothing particularly attractive, and would require volumes to explain them; I therefore shall forbear to



fatigue my readers, as all that I could collect would add but little to afford them a clearer idea of the popular religion, or polytheism of the Chinese. If I had been acquainted well with the language and literature, I might, perhaps, have been enabled to give a more perfect account of these matters.

There seems to be no regular priesthood in China, supported by and under the immediate protection of the government. I have understood that the temples are built from donations by the rich, and by the parishes and villages near them; and that the priests are supported in the same manner, as well as by particular gifts and grants of land, &c. from religious persons, for the performance of certain rites. There are monasteries both for men and women, where numbers of each sex devote themselves to celibacy, and are punished if caught breaking their vows: the Chinese, however, say that both have become very depraved. Every temple and convent that I saw had rice-fields, gardens, &c.; and, as the monks live mostly on vegetable food, they get an ample supply from their own grounds, besides often producing a large surplus for sale; and they are enabled thus to amass wealth. Although there is no



established priesthood, yet, as all classes and descriptions provide for it, there are plenty of people ready to embrace the profession; but, generally speaking, they appear to have less influence, and are less respected, than in any other country of the globe.

I have been told, however, that some of them acquire considerable wealth, power and influence, lead rigid lives, and are strict in their conduct and attention to the duties of their station in life. These, however, must be few, from the nature of the establishments. The religious sects are said to be numerous in China, but all of them, except the worshippers of *Budha* or *Fo*, are liable to be persecuted by the government. These latter appear to be sanctioned without reserve, perhaps because they are exceedingly numerous.—Christians must be very secret indeed in their observances, for the Chinese government considers our religion as a kind of pestilence, and has conceived a deep-rooted antipathy against it, not to be overcome by mild means. Mussulmen, in some provinces, perform their rites openly; in others they are restricted. Many of the Chinese, also, that attend the temples of *Fo*, have other forms and rites, which are not



inculcated by that religion. The imperial family and most of the Tartar mandarins are of the sect of *Budha*, and believe in the Metempsychosis, or transmigration of souls. Some of this sect, on that account, live entirely on vegetables, and are careful not to kill or injure, if possible, any living creature.

Many of the Chinese appeared to me to believe in the immortality of the soul, and to possess a tolerably correct notion of a future state; but the majority of those with whom I conversed on this interesting subject had very confused ideas. They entered into vain speculations, as to whether we are to inhabit the other world in our terrestrial form, or to be purified and changed into something celestial. Nothing can be more ridiculous than their superstitions, and the implicit belief they put in supernatural agency, witches, devils, ghosts, hobgoblins, and every imaginary being that fancy could create to torment ignorance and credulity. My own *Comprador* once endeavoured to persuade me, in the most serious manner, that he had seen an old man, clothed in white, with a very long white beard, pass, for several nights in succession, down the court-yard to the gate, which was locked; and



when he followed him to see who it was, the apparition disappeared through the keyhole. He was quite vexed when I laughed at him, and told him he must have had a very strong imagination.

Supernatural agency is imagined to be applied to every extraordinary occurrence in life, and when any such thing happens, the *Shing-Shang*, or astrologer, is immediately consulted; nor will a Chinese move an inch out of the course prescribed by that person. He makes, besides, a sacrifice to his guardian God, an offering to avert from him the impending misfortune.

The moment a child is born, it is accounted one year old, twelve months being allowed from the conception to the birth. Every circumstance attending his birth, as well as any thing extraordinary that happens to the mother during her pregnancy, are registered carefully, as well as the moment of entrance into the world, &c. The parents then call the *Shing-Shang*, or astrologer, to write it all out fair, on large red paper, and he proceeds to the temple, where he consults the gods whether or not the incidents mentioned are fortunate or unfortunate, and at what time they ought to contract



for the marriage of their child. Most rich families have a tutor, or *Shing-Shang*, in the house to instruct their children—these people being held in great repute, and consulted on all matters of importance. The Chinese have their lucky and unlucky planets; and should their child be born under the latter, the *Shing-Shang* is employed to consult the oracles, and perform a number of rites and ceremonies at certain temples, in order to turn aside the malignant influence of the planet. It is inconceivable the bad effects produced by this stupid superstition, which is carried to a length truly absurd. These *Shing-Shangs*, from being tutors as well as astrologers, have a smattering of Chinese literature; they are, moreover, of many grades, and are always consulted by rich and poor, as they are supposed to be acquainted with the books containing the ancient rites and ceremonies, unintelligible to men of ordinary education, who therefore employ these people, and abide by their decisions. The *Shing-Shang* is thus a man of importance to all classes; idleness, as well as ignorance, finding oftentimes occasion for his services.

Contracts of marriage are made when the parties are from four to seven years old: I



mean, between rich families. After the *Shing-Shang's* decision is known, the oldest female relation of the family is generally despatched to conclude a matrimonial alliance with some person previously fixed on as a desirable connection. Amongst the higher classes, these matters are often previously agreed upon by the fathers of the parties, and the business of sending a female relation becomes a mere matter of form; a mission, however, of this sort is considered highly important, particularly when there is any thing to be acquired by the match. When it is understood the proffered alliance will not be rejected, negotiations openly commence by a present from the party making proposals. This ought, rigidly, to consist of nothing but betel-leaves (*Chu-Nam*), or prepared lime and betel-nut for chewing—when the parents and the agent chew together and drink tea during the signing of the contract; which ceremony is deemed absolutely necessary to render it binding. A *chop*, or contract, must contain the name of the father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, at least, their condition in life, and various other circumstances, and whether the child has been bought, adopted, or is the true lineal descend-



ant of his father. It must be understood, however, that those particulars vary according to rank and situation of life, and may be altogether overlooked, or rather arranged, by bribing the *Shing-Shang*, who manages the pedigree and everything else, for a small sum of money. These matters settled, the parents of the husband send, shortly after, a present to his intended bride, which consists of silver, gold, and stone ornaments for the hair, bangles or bracelets for the wrists, rings, and other articles of value, or of dress.

It would be a useless and a fatiguing detail to describe all the compliments, invitations, ceremonies, presents, &c. which take place between the parties, until the time appointed for a marriage. The young couple are not permitted to converse, or even see one another, unless at public festivals (where the women are seen at a distance), until the day on which the wife is sent to the husband. If the parties be very rich, there is a grand and expensive procession, a few days previously to the marriage, through some of the principal streets of the town, by the husband's relatives, with music and an ostentatious display of all the presents intended for the bride, accompanied by splendid offerings to



the gods, all carried on men's shoulders. The presents are exposed on gilt and painted sedans, open at the sides, highly ornamented, and adorned with red hangings: and everything is conducted in the most magnificent manner. On the day of the marriage, there is another grand procession of the presents sent by her parents to the bride, elegantly decorated, and publicly exposed in the same manner.

When the moment arrives for the bride to be sent to her husband, she is placed in a large sedan-chair richly gilt, shut up close, locked, and the key sent to the husband; and in this manner she is conveyed to him in procession, all the carriers dressed in red. I was once present at a separation between a bride and her parents. Her feet were so small she could not walk, although she was fifteen years old; and she was carried on the back of a maid-servant. All the family appeared much affected, particularly the women, who sobbed aloud; the father shed tears, and the daughter was, with difficulty, torn from the embraces of her parents, and placed in the sedan-chair. It was a touching scene. The parents must have felt a lively anxiety for the fate of their child, and the child herself not a little inquietude at being torn from



their arms, and resigned suddenly to the embraces of a stranger, and the despotic will of a husband. They must have been cold feelings, indeed, that could have met calmly so rude an attack, preceding a separation that lasts until the third day after the marriage. This sad spectacle by no means pleased me, or presented to my ideas the happiness of a wedding-day: it rather resembled a funeral, with the additional painful reflection, that the young lady, instead of ending her career of earthly troubles, was only just going to commence them.

What Europeans consider necessary before marriage, that is, a little reciprocity of passion, the Chinese look to obtaining after the ceremony is over. As it often happens that a husband detests his first wife, since he has not had the chusing her, he leaves the unfortunate girl to herself, and seeks his enjoyments in low amours, in gaming, or in the taking to himself several concubines. In the choice of the latter he is free to exercise his own taste or caprice; but the regulation of the first marriage by others, is a point of old established custom, which he is obliged to submit to, and it is arranged without his consent by his parents.

Perhaps the Chinese women feel less than we



imagine on such occasions, since their education is not calculated to excite the finer feelings and sentiments; and what appears difficult for us to reconcile, may be quite easy for them. Love, in China, is not what it is in Europe; that is to say, it does not exist under the same form, seeing that there is so little sentiment and the occasions are fewer of exciting it between man and woman, than in other countries. Mere animal gratification must be the principal incitement amongst a people destitute of refined feelings, and prone to satisfy their passions without restraint.

Shortly after a marriage has been celebrated, several dinners are given by the parents of the newly-married couple; and, on these occasions, after dinner, the bride is shown to the guests for a few minutes, in close approach, though no one, except her nearest relations, is allowed to speak to her. I once had the good fortune to be invited, together with three other Europeans, to a dinner of this kind, and the husband took some pains to show us his wife, who was handsome, by holding a candle close to her face for some time. He then put it on the floor, to show us her beautiful small feet, of only five to six inches long; I confess I did not admire them, as



she could not stand on them without the aid of two maid-servants, who supported her on either side. She appeared about fourteen or fifteen years of age, and not in the least embarrassed,—although, as is customary, her eyes were kept fixed on the floor, whilst the Europeans were near her. However, female curiosity got the better of *old custom*, and she could not refrain from taking a glance at us, to see what kind of animal was that *Fan-Qui* she, no doubt, had heard represented as a terrible devil. Her eyes were black, and sparkling; and, altogether, she was the prettiest-faced Chinese woman of the better sort that I had seen; for, in general, they are far from being handsome. I was told she was of a good family, but not very rich; the parents of the young man having chosen her for her beauty,—a circumstance very rare in China, where matches are almost always made from interested motives.

These feasts continue several days, always accompanied by theatrical entertainments, and kept up on both sides (the women having their parties apart), until all the friends and relations are amply regaled. Theatrical exhibitions prove very convenient for the host, who is, during that time, saved the trouble of conversing with his



guests, except at intervals, for the music makes such an infernal noise, there is no possibility of holding a conversation. In the decorations and ornaments of nuptial ceremonies, no colour but red is used.

The funerals of the rich are more expensive than their marriages. The colour used is a light blue for the lanterns, decorations, &c. whilst the mourning is white and grey. Splendid processions with music take place, and I have been told that ten to fifteen thousand dollars have been known to be spent on a funeral. Many of them, after the ceremony, should the *Shing-Shangs* not have been able to chuse a lucky spot for the tomb, keep the corpse embalmed in a leaden coffin, which is placed in a sanctuary; until a suitable place is found, and the propitious moment arrives to bury it. When a difficult case occurs, long conferences take place between the *Shing-Shangs*; old books are consulted, offerings made to the gods to procure certain favourable omens, and it sometimes happens they are several years before they can decide the matter. *Pauhn-Kai-Qua* kept his father's body several years; and, at length, it was decided the youngest son should convey it to *Fo-kien*; which he did, and buried him there.



During the time the coffin remains in the sanctuary, the annual homage is paid to the departed father, in the same manner as if he had been buried.—Chusing the situation of a tomb is one of the nicest and most important matters that can be agitated; for on it is supposed to depend the peace of the departed friend, as well as the good or bad fortune of his relations who remain.

The tombs of the rich are very expensive, not only occupying a large space that must be purchased for them, but being often built in a costly manner, and requiring to be kept constantly in repair, as inattention to this particular is expected to produce certain misfortune. Whilst the living are seen inhabiting the low marshy grounds, the dead occupy the high, airy, and beautiful situations, commanding a fine view of the country round! A Chinese tomb is in the form of a crescent, bearing an inscription in red characters. They are large or small, according to the wealth or the caprice of those who order them; but the graves of the poor are like those of other countries, with a stone at the head, bearing also an inscription, in red characters.



## CHAPTER XI.

General conformity of habits and customs among the various classes in China—Language and education—Industry and frugality of the Chinese—Office of the Beggar-Mandarin—Characteristic anecdote—Police in Canton—Arts and dexterity of thieves—Pawnbrokers—Origin of the European commerce with China—Restrictions imposed—Difficulties of the Hong-merchants.

IN China, rich and poor, high and low, perform the same rites, and ceremonies—their customs, manners, habits, &c. corresponding in every particular, excepting only those points of difference arising inevitably from the possession of wealth or an exalted station. Almost all but those of the very lowest class, and even many of them, can read and write. Education, to a certain degree, is more common amongst the poor than in any other country; but my reader must not be deceived by the supposition that it is of a kind which much enlightens the possessor.

The Chinese language is said to consist of upwards of sixty thousand characters, nearly



half of which are obsolete, and a large portion of what remains only employed in composing books on abstruse subjects, and expounding the laws. It is evident that those characters employed for the ordinary purposes of life cannot amount to any exorbitant number. A man who is acquainted with fifteen or twenty thousand characters is esteemed very learned, and with justice, since the acquirement of them must cost him more than half the time allotted to human existence. Merchants, shopmen, mechanics, &c. who are not ambitious of distinguishing themselves in the literary world, acquire no greater amount of language than what is barely necessary to conduct their business; and, what makes them the more careless, is the having the *Shing-Shangs* always at hand, to write or decide in any difficult business they do not themselves understand. It will readily be perceived, that the education of the poor, so much vaunted in China by many authors, is so extremely circumscribed as to convey very little real instruction. In fact, it merely consists in exercising the memory to make it retain a few crooked characters, sufficient for the commonest purposes of life, or in enabling its disciples to read those absurd as well as obscene tales and fables which



abound there, and which are composed in such language as may suit the depraved state and comprehension of the populace. Obscene books are prohibited by law; but they are, notwithstanding, to be seen constantly exposed for sale in the streets, the seller paying a trifling sum for the privilege to the police-officers of the district.

In a country where the industrious find readily the means of subsistence, and where *Shing-Shangs* abound, the expense of having a few characters of the ordinary sort imprinted on a child's memory cannot be much, nor beyond what most of the common people can afford, who have health and strength to labour. Most of the Chinese are naturally intelligent, and, applying themselves diligently to whatever they take in hand, of course acquire soon what they wish to learn. In short, they are naturally a well-disposed, excellent people, whose good qualities, under a better government, would render them rich and happy. It is impossible, even now, under all the difficulties they have to encounter, to live a month in China without being struck with admiration at the activity, industry, perseverance and frugality of the middling and lower classes. If a Chinese can only find the means of amassing a few dollars, he will



certainly increase his capital by economy and persevering attention to his business, until he places himself far out of the reach of want. It must not be inferred from this, that there are not a great many debauched and profligate people amongst them. There are certainly very many; but fewer, in proportion to the amount of population, than in other countries.\*

The facts I have stated respecting the administration of their government prove it to be a very bad one; and it must always be considered a national disgrace, to see a country destitute of public hospitals, or any humane institutions

\* The law that delegates power to the father over his children, provides also, that at his death it should pass to the eldest son, should he be old enough, and in case of non-age, to the uncle, or the nearest male branch of the father's family. In case of misfortune to parents, children are bound to support them. Sons often live after marriage in the same house with their father, yielding a portion of their industry for the benefit of the family at large. Affectionate brothers continue to live, thus connected, in subordination to their elder brother for many years after the death of the parents. Others, however, quarrel about the division of the father's property; and sometimes not only the sons but the nephews join in the dispute, and produce a great deal of ill blood before the business is settled; especially if the deceased be rich, and the heirs numerous.



whatever, whilst crowds of beggars die of want in the streets!

No one can touch the dead bodies of these unfortunates save the Beggar-Mandarin, or his men; and he, therefore, often leaves them, as an annoyance to the inhabitants, until paid for removing them.

Beggars go in companies of five to twenty persons, singing and beating *gongs* at every shop; and the shopmen give them immediately two or three *cash* to get rid of their noise. Some are very disgusting figures, who parade the streets almost naked, and covered with sores, or disfigured by disease; whilst others cut their flesh in different parts with razors, to excite compassion. Such hideous spectacles prove the absence of philanthropy, as well as of such wholesome laws and regulations as exist in every other part of the world having any claim to civilization.

A beggar once came near to my door and lay down, but was so weak from hunger that, when a few *cash* were thrown to him, he could not rise to go and buy himself something to eat. This was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and I tried in vain to prevail with my servants to give him a little food. They all said they would not go near him on any account, as it was contrary to



the law, and they might afterwards be accused of his death should he die there. At night, however, one of them carried him a little rice; but it was too late: he had expired. The next morning I sent for the Beggar-Mandarin of the district; and, without explaining what had happened, offered him ten dollars to take the man away, as it was disagreeable to have him lying near the door. He consented, and the man was immediately removed. The owner of the house, when I mentioned the circumstance to him, repaid me the ten dollars with thanks; "for," said he, "had *I* been obliged to ask him, he would not have removed the corpse for treble that sum."

In other respects the police of Canton is very strict; for, after eight o'clock at night, the gates of every street are shut. Whoever goes then abroad is furnished with a lantern, on which is marked, in large characters, the name of the owner of the house or master of the family where he lives. Any one who acts otherwise is, of course, arrested by the watchmen or police officers, and obliged to give a good account of himself, or be punished. Every street has its watchmen, independent of the police, and sanctioned by the government, but paid by the in-



habitants. These men are placed also as porters to open and shut the gates when any one wishes to pass; on which occasion such person is to declare who and what he is, or he will not be allowed to go through the gates. The master of every family is responsible for those who inhabit his house; so that he may be said to contribute to render the police more rigid.

From these regulations one would imagine it impossible for thieves to commit any depredations whatever. However, they are very dexterous in China. Most of the houses and shops are only one story high, covered with tiles, and few of them ceiled within; so that robbers, by removing the tiles, can get in from the roofs; and what they steal is conveyed away over the tops of the houses (which are built closely together), to a place where they have friends prepared to receive their booty. In this manner, I have been told, they often convey away quantities of merchandize, and with such care and secrecy as not to be detected, and seldom even to disturb the inmates of the house or shop where they steal. It is, however, probable that they sometimes bribe the watchmen, who are constantly beating the hour on a bamboo, and on the alert all night. The Chinese say the



fellows make use of soporific drugs and charcoal with which they fumigate the house, after opening the roof, and close the tiles again, until they suppose the smoke of the drugs has taken effect. This, they say, acts so powerfully on the nerves as to produce a stupor or lassitude, and a weakness not to be got rid of for some time after; and, although a person may awake from the stupor it first produces, yet he finds himself unable to move, and sees his property abstracted without the power of exerting himself to save it.

A shopkeeper of my acquaintance related to me that he had been fumigated, and saw several packages of goods drawn up through the roof, whilst he lay in a sort of trance, and thought he had been *dreaming* of robbers, until the morning made him sensible of his loss. As he was a great coward, I rather suspect his trance must have been caused by bodily fear, for I have heard also that Chinese thieves are apt to murder when resistance is offered by the family; on which account, the latter must be well armed and strong, or submit quietly. Single robbers enter a house quite naked, with their skin well oiled, so that it is almost impossible to hold them. The Chinese say these fellows are rarely detected, for they can walk so



lightly and perform their task in so masterly a manner, as not to make the slightest noise.\* There are persons who receive stolen goods, and to whom the robbers immediately convey the property; so that, if they are taken, the property is rarely found, unless they are obliged to confess by torture to whom they have given it.

In Canton there is an immense number of pawnbrokers' shops of all descriptions. Many of the petty ones receive stolen goods; but the larger and more respectable ones would not risk their reputation. They are established by individuals who pay a tax for the privilege to government, and may be said to be the only institutions in China which supply, in some measure, the place of banks; but they are conducted under such bad regulations as render them oftentimes more injurious than useful. The large pawnbrokers are men of large capital, who receive all sorts of property as collateral security for money advanced upon it, according to agreement, both as to value, interest, and time. There is no regulation of these points by

\* The Chinese are also the most expert pick-pockets in the world. I have seen a stranger's pockets rifled in a few minutes, and turned inside out before he knew any thing about it.



law; therefore, they only advance two thirds of the amount, according to their own valuation, (if it be merchandize the valuation is made at the lowest price of the market at the moment,) and charge an enormous interest, especially if they discover the borrower to be much in want of money. Fifteen, and even twenty to thirty *per cent.* are given in necessitous cases; and, if the goods are not redeemed within the time given in the contract, they become the property of the pawnbroker. Merchants hard pushed for money have been known to buy goods at a credit, and immediately pawn them at a heavy loss to get specie, and sometimes continue the game until completely ruined. Gamesters, also, who are hard run, pawn all they have in the world at these shops. Where there are no banks, the pawnbrokers' establishments might be made extremely useful, by putting them under the control of the law, and of such restrictions as to prevent their imposing on the necessitous and hastening the ruin of the unfortunate. When any thing is pawned at these places, they give a simple receipt for the property, stating its value and the advance, as well as the term fixed for redeeming it, without regard to the person who deposits it: so that



whoever is the holder of the receipt, no matter by what means he gets possession of it, has a right to claim the deposit on paying the money advanced at the time indicated.

When we reflect on the immense commerce that is carried on in the interior of China, as well as on her extensive trade with all the Indo-Chinese islands, one cannot help wondering how it has arrived at such a pitch, oppressed and embarrassed as it is with all sorts of vexations, exactions, and taxes. The success has been brought about by the native good disposition of the people, by an immense population, and I must add, an industry, a perseverance, and a frugality that surpass those of every other nation of the globe. The government of China considers the nation as we do our hives of bees, of which we can smother what portion we deem fit, to regale ourselves on the fruits of their industry; being always sure to have our stock renewed in a short time.

The first commerce carried on by Europeans with China was at a port called Emouy, in Fokien, where it would probably have remained, had it not been for the misconduct of individuals, and the idea of forming a company of monopolists at Canton. Here it has been loaded



with all manner of exactions and restrictions, so peculiarly expensive, as well as degrading, to the several nations who trade with them. The Chinese Company was instituted not long after the British commenced trading with China, at the instigation of the great *Pauhn-Quai-Qua*. The tea-leaf, however, was first carried from Fokien to Europe, where it is called, in the language of that province, *tay*; this accounts for the name we give it, which is so different from the Canton name, *cha*—the *a* pronounced broad, as in French.—A jealous, timid, and feeble government seized with avidity the plan of a monopoly, to conduct the European commerce immediately under the eyes of the magistrates of their great commercial city, Canton, where they could more easily collect the revenues, as well as keep a watchful eye on strangers, and prevent disputes, which might involve them in war. By making the monopolists also responsible for the conduct of the foreigners consigned to them, they placed them under a kind of double police, since the Company would be obliged, for their own safety, to keep a narrow watch upon the *Fan-quis*, and thereby prevent disturbances or disputes being carried to extremity. The sole right of exporting



and importing was given to them. No one but a Hong-merchant could export any of the productions or manufactures of China, except the dealers in China-ware, who were permitted to export their own ware, but nothing else. The Company are prohibited from exporting lead, copper, iron, tin, zinc, gold, silver, gun-powder, sulphur, salt-petre, and salt, &c. and are also rendered responsible for the duties on all goods imported or exported in European vessels. An enormous list of prohibitions has caused much corruption and venality, and has rendered smuggling much more profitable than, and quite as sure as, honest trading—being under the protection of the local authorities or Mandarins, and, consequently, when they are paid, practicable without risk.

It was thought the monopoly would have kept down all competition from shopkeepers and petty dealers, and that the whole of the foreign trade would remain to the Hong-merchants. The contrary has been the result, in consequence of the bad conduct of some of the members of that company, who, being poor and in want of ready money, exported goods belonging to shopkeepers as their own, and at a reduced price, to receive in cash what the Government



allows them to pay at twelve months' credit. This plan has done much injury to the *Hong*, because strangers can buy cheaper from the shopkeepers; and these are sure of getting property exported at a reasonable rate, on applying to the poorer members of the *Hong*, or company.



## CHAPTER XII.

Infrequency of travelling among Chinese — Probable causes of this — Propensity to boasting — Reasons for the absence of national greatness — Partial differences and general resemblance in costume, manners, &c. — Style of domestic building — Decorative gardening — Illuminations and fire works — Fruits and vegetables — Markets and provisions — Mode of preparing soy — Sweetmeats.

I COULD not perceive that the Chinese, although curious to know what passes in foreign countries, seemed to have much knowledge of the interior of their own; and, amongst a numerous acquaintance, I knew but two or three who had been to Pekin. Officers of Government and traders carrying goods for sale seem the principal travellers. Those who travel from mere curiosity seem very few; and it is probable the rigid police of the country may prevent excursions for mere pleasure, which, having no apparent object, might be suspected of improper motives: yet a Chinese, if you should happen to draw a comparison unfavourable to his country,



will immediately assure you, (although he knows nothing of it,) that every thing is in the highest and best order throughout the Celestial Empire. When the English troops were at Macao, several of the Chinese saw them exercise; but they could not be persuaded of the superiority, and persisted that their own bows and arrows, and matchlocks, were much better. One of them declared that they had men in the interior, sprung from a race of giants, and who, with their battle-axes alone, would mow down a whole army! This was said also with great warmth, and a manner quite serious.

It is clearly evident the Chinese never can become a great nation, not possessing either the energy of soul, or the force of body, combined with cool determined bravery, which distinguishes the nations of Europe, and renders them fit for great enterprises. They are naturally, on the contrary, a feeble race of men; and where policy, religion, habits, and customs conspire against the growth of noble sentiments as well as of physical strength, we must expect to see a superabundant share of meekness. When, however, this quality is found in union with good nature, industry, sobriety, and frugality, as in China, we could wish at least to see such attri-



butes rather cherished and encouraged, than trampled upon and despised.

I have been told that all the several provinces of that immense empire have their different dialects, though the written language is the same throughout. At Macao, it is common enough for a Portuguese of that place to interpret between a man from Canton and one from *Chin-choo*, (a district of Fokien,) should they not know how to write. Their costume, although it differs partially in the various provinces, yet has a general character of sameness in it, as well as their physiognomies—so as to indicate a strong national resemblance; and a European must live there some time, before he can distinguish all the shades of countenance, dress, manners, &c. After residing a few years, and after minute observation, one finds a much greater variety than one would imagine, not only in the physiognomies, but in the costume and manners of the people of the different provinces who come to Canton; and yet there is a striking sameness in every large assemblage of the people, as they all wear the same *style* of dress, and all have long hair, and their heads half-shaved.

The houses are, for the most part, only one story high, and those of the lower orders have a



mean and miserable appearance, whilst those of the rich have numbers of fine, ornamented, and airy apartments, with spaces between them to admit the light as well as the air. These spaces are always in front and at the back, the light being seldom given at the sides; and the houses are surrounded by extensive and beautiful gardens, adorned with artificial lakes, rocks, cascades, buildings of various descriptions, walks, bridges, &c.

In the ornamenting and beautifying of gardens the Chinese excel all other nations. By means of a variety of winding walks, they make a small place appear twice as large as it really is. Innumerable flower pots, containing a great variety of beautiful *asters*, of which they are very fond, are sometimes arranged in a labyrinth, from which you cannot get out again without a guide. They seem to have a very extensive assortment of *asters*; one species is quite white, as large as a rose, with long pending leaves, and the Chinese use it in the season for salad, justly esteeming it a very great delicacy. When the *asters* are all in full bloom, the pots arranged handsomely near a piece of water, and the walks and alleys well lighted, at night, with variously coloured lamps, a Chinese garden has the ap-



pearance of one of those enchanted places we read of in the Arabian Tales.

Their illuminations and fire-works are always managed with great taste and cleverness. Fire-works are often introduced; one sort, particularly, called a *drum*, they are fond of exhibiting to strangers, as it is very curious and entertaining. It is made in the form of a drum, but, in size, is equal to half a puncheon; the upper end closed and the lower open, with a match in the centre. The *drum* is suspended to a pole about ten or twelve feet high. On lighting the match, the representation of a battle, by sea or land, falls down below the *drum*, and burns off with great effect. When this is done, another match takes fire, and lets down a second, and so on, until five, and sometimes seven different scenes have been presented. All these are composed of paper and bamboo in the most ingenious manner, and form the most pleasing and extraordinary of all the Chinese fire-works.

As their gardens are so fine, the reader will naturally conclude they must have good fruits. Fruits in China are so plentiful, that there is less attention paid to them than in colder climates. Almost every month of the year has its



peculiar fruits; but those most esteemed are the oranges, mangoes, and lichees. They have pears of various sorts, peaches, plumbs, pine-apples, water-melons, bananas, plantains, longans, wampees, guaras, jacks, shaddocks, grapes, figs, &c. &c.

In the height of the season an orange costs but a *cash* or two, but is always peeled—the rind being more valuable, for medicinal purposes, &c. than the orange itself. The sellers are remarkably expert at peeling them. Fruits are sold on stalls in every street; the prices are oftentimes marked on a piece of bamboo, so that the buyer can go and eat of what he likes, throw down his money on the stall, and walk off without uttering a single word. Vegetables are sold in the same manner, or cried through the streets; but they are generally weighed. The buyer weighs for himself with his own *tychin*, or steelyard, which he carries with him, and the seller weighs after him to see that he is correct. In the art of cultivating vegetables they are not to be equalled, and at Macao there are as fine potatoes and cabbages as in any part of the world. Potatoes do not succeed so well at Canton; but as the Chinese are not fond of them,



this is doubtless owing more to the want of care than the difference of climate in a distance of only ninety English miles.

There are also to be seen in the streets itinerant blacksmiths, menders of China ware, and, in short, all sorts of tradesmen. Sellers of fish and meat cry them through the streets also. The fish are carried about alive in tubs with water; one at each end of a bamboo, balanced on the shoulder. Indeed, the Chinese carry every thing in this manner; and, if they have not wherewith to balance their load, they put a stone in one of the tubs, or baskets, to make it even. There are, besides, several very large markets in the suburbs of Canton, and lesser ones in almost every street. Pork seems their favourite food; nor am I surprised at the preference they give it, for it is by far the most delicate-flavoured meat in China. Strangers take a dislike to it at first, seeing it carried about the streets in quantities, and excessively fat. The Chinese take as much care of their pigs as they do of their children. Nothing but rice and water is given them (the rice boiled); I mean those destined for killing; and these are kept confined in a sty, washed once and sometimes twice a day, and scrubbed clean,



which keeps them in good health, and makes them become very fat in a short time. After I had seen the careful manner of keeping their pigs, I got over my prejudice against pork, and, at last, preferred it. Good beef is to be had at Whampoa, but none at Canton; and mutton is excessively dear. Beef costs about 8*d.* sterling per lb. and pork 9*d.* to 10*d.* The sheep are of a large race, with broad tails, resembling those of the Cape of Good Hope; and a fat one costs generally from seventeen to twenty-five dollars. They are brought from the northern provinces, and fattened at Canton.

Their poultry is very good, particularly capons, which are very large and well-flavoured, costing from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* each; they are very large, often weighing six and a half to seven pounds. Turkeys are extremely high-priced, because they succeed badly in that climate. A disease, something like the small-pox, that appears in large pustules on the head, destroys a great number; so that a fine fat turkey will cost from five to eight dollars. Geese and ducks are the most plentiful, and, consequently, the cheapest. As the Chinese are very fond of ducks' eggs salted, there are immense flocks, kept principally for that purpose, in boats



on the rivers and canals. Some of these boats have flocks consisting of one thousand or one thousand five hundred ducks, managed by only two or three men, who tend them like shepherds during the day, whilst they feed on the rice-fields. The birds are tractable, and obedient to their call, whenever they wish them to change their place or return to the boat. A duck-boat is made very broad, and over the centre is a large platform that extends about five or six feet beyond the gun-wale, and occupies two thirds of the length of the whole boat. Around the inside of this platform are constructed two stories of nests, where the ducks lay their eggs. At night they are called home to the boat, and return the moment they hear the well-known whoop of the keeper. A great bustle and quacking takes place among them, every one trying which shall be first to run up the board that is let down from the platform; and the last three or four ducks are always whipped with small switches, to make them more alert in future. I asked the keepers if they did not frequently lose a number of their ducks. They said, no; that they very seldom lost a single duck, as they obeyed their call, and when any of them were left at a little distance



from the flock, they would return the moment they heard the keeper's voice. This is a profitable business, ducks' eggs being so favourite an article of food all over China; and I have been told that the artificial heat of sand-stoves has been employed to propagate them. I observed the fishermen who trail their nets in Macao roads to use a large quantity of ducks' eggs. They steep the fine nets for meshing fish in the whites, and expose them to the sun until perfectly dry, which gives them a shining appearance in the water; and they salt the yolks for eating. Wild ducks, geese, and teal are taken in abundance, and are very high-flavoured. Geese are caught by laying thin cords, after a particular manner, on the rice-fields, where they feed, by which means they get their feet entangled; but ducks and teal are caught in nets hung on poles, not far from the ponds which they are accustomed to visit at night. Two persons are ready, one at each end of the net, and the moment the birds fly into it they let it run down on the ground, so as to cover them; and thus they are taken out alive. They are then put into close baskets, kept constantly dark, and are fed with rice in the husk (called in Chinese *paddy*) until they become very fat.



There are also, at Canton, rice-birds, snipes, plovers, quails, partridges, pheasants, and, in fact, all sorts of game in plenty.

Few places are better supplied with provisions than Canton; yet it is the dearest part of the eastern world for a European to live in, owing to the nature of their establishments, and the venality of the constituted authorities. All those who serve strangers being obliged to pay heavy fees to the Mandarins, they are, of course, forced to impose upon them, in order to provide for themselves; and besides, this *squeezing*, as they emphatically term it, serves them as a pretext for all sorts of impositions upon others. If you ask a boatman, or any one else, why he takes so high a fare, he answers, "I must pay the Mandarin;" and if you do not give him his price he will not serve you. In fact, every movement of a *Fan-qui* is taxed as well as his food; and he may be said to live in a kind of extended prison, under the care of the nation at large, who are all spies on his conduct.\*

\* Some of the missionaries I have conversed with, who have been sent away from Peking, have assured me they enjoyed much more liberty there than the Europeans at Canton. They acknowledged, at the same time, their



The Chinese are very fond of fish, which abound, and are cheaper than other food. Great care is taken to propagate carp, tench, and all sorts of pond fish; and they certainly have them as fine and as fat as possible. Almost every one who is rich enough to have a garden, has always plenty of fish in the ponds, which latter form, invariably, a necessary appendage, and tend to produce ornament, at the same time that they prove highly useful.

An article of food, of which all classes appear extremely fond, is *thow-foo* and *foo-chack*, a sort of flummery, made from beans, very palatable and nourishing. *Soy*, their famous sauce for all kinds of food, is also made from beans. The beans are boiled until all the water is nearly evaporated, and they begin to burn, when they are taken from the fire and placed in large, wide-mouthed jars, exposed to the sun and air; water and a certain portion of molasses or very brown sugar are added. These jars are stirred well every day, until the liquor and beans are completely mixed and fermented; the material is

acquaintance was confined more to the middling classes, it being very difficult to get into the houses of the rich, and particularly of the Mandarins of the civil list.



then strained, salted, and boiled, and skimmed until clarified; and will, after this last process, become of a very deep brown colour, and keep any length of time. Many persons have thought that gravy was used in preparing this condiment; but this appears not to be the case, the composition being entirely a vegetable one, of an agreeable flavour, and said to be wholesome. There are two or three qualities of it; to make the best requires much care and attention. Japanese *soy* is much esteemed in China, on account of the superior manner in which it is made; perhaps they have a particular sort of bean for that purpose. Shopkeepers at Canton who sell soy, have large platforms on the roofs of their houses, where the jars for preparing soy are all arranged, and exposed to the sun; for the consumption of this article is enormous. Neither rich nor poor can dine, breakfast, or sup without soy; it is the sauce for all sorts of food, gives a zest to every dish, and may be said to be indispensable at a Chinese repast.

In general, very little meat is eaten. Their dinners being cut up into small pieces, and generally stewed, the meat part forms so small a portion, as only to serve as a kind of zest to render the rice palatable, of which latter the



common people will eat two or three large bowls at a time. It must be nourishing food, as the *cotton-coolies* and other hard labourers all appear in very good case, although they work incessantly, and eat of scarcely any thing but rice and vegetables.

Sweet meats of all sorts are much liked in China, but the only palatable ones made there are the ginger and the pine-apple; all the others are so sweet as to lose the taste of the fruit.



## CHAPTER XIII.

General account of the varieties and management of Tea  
—Classification of Teas, black and green—Necessity of experience in the choice of Teas—Chinese mode of infusion—Process of firing and packing Tea—Skill of a Chinese tea-smeller—Concluding remarks on the Government of China, and on the Chinese foreign commerce, particularly the Tea-trade.

I WILL now endeavour to give some information on the subject of *Tea*—which, being not only much used and esteemed in China, but, in fact, all over the world, must possess an interest with all classes of readers.

I shall give the best account of this extraordinary and invaluable production that I have been able to obtain, premising that I have had my information from several persons, some of whom were in the habit of going to the tea-districts annually. Their concurring testimony induces me to feel satisfied of the truth of what I shall now concisely relate.

*Teas* are of four distinct families or stocks;



I mean those generally known in commerce, and brought in quantities to sell to Europeans at Canton. There are other particular kinds, only used in the country, and rarely, if ever, exported, because they are made from different trees, in small quantities, and are both too scarce and too high priced to export. The former then are called *Bohea*, *Ankay*, *Hyson*, and *Singlo*.

The *Bohea* and *Ankay* are the two stocks from which all the black teas in their various subdivisions are produced.

BLACK TEAS.

1st sort. *Bohea* and *Ankay Bohea*. What is termed simply *Bohea* is the commonest sort of *Bohea* stock, and sells generally at Canton for 12 to 14 *taels per pecul*.\*

*Ankay Bohea* is the commonest sort of the *Ankay* stock, inferior to the first mentioned, and sells for 8 to 10 *taels the pecul*. Every Tea with *Ankay* prefixed to the name is always inferior to those with the denomination of *Bohea*.

\* The *tael* is equal to one dollar and two thirds, and the *pecul*, as before stated, is a weight of one hundred and thirty-three pounds and a half English, divided into *cattico* by the Chinese: one hundred *cattico* making one *pecul*.



*Bohea* and *Ankay* are the names of two districts of the same province; but the teas produced in the former are superior to those of the latter, in the same manner as the wines of Medoc surpass those of Grave, though the districts join each other.

2nd SORT. The *Bohea Congou* and *Ankay Congou*. These are the next qualities, which rise a little above the *Bohea*: the *Bohea Congo* sells at from 18 to 22 taels the pecul, and the *Ankay Congou* at 15 to 17 taels the pecul.

3rd SORT. *Bohea Campoi* and *Ankay Campoi*, rising a little higher than the *Congoes*. *Bohea Campoi* sells at 14 to 27 taels per pecul, and *Ankay Campoi* from 22 to 24 ditto.

4th SORT. *Bohea Souchong* and *Ankay Souchong*, rising above the *Campois*. *Bohea Souchong* sells at from 26 to 46 taels per pecul; *Ankay Souchong* from 20 to 30.

There are, however, some qualities of the *Bohea Souchong* of superior flavour, which are as high as from 60 to 80 taels per pecul, and others, scented with flowers, or prepared in a particular way, which sell still dearer, such as *Fa-heung-cha*, *Pow-chong-cha*, *Sung-chy-cha*, *Leung-thune-cha*, &c. *Sung-chy* is often made from the *Ankay* stock, and, although agreeable, it is



inferior to the *Bohea* sort. Of the *Ankay* sort, also, there are some teas of superior flavour, mixed with white leaves, and called *Flowered Ankays*, besides the inferior ones called also *Ankay Souchongs*, which do not sell for more than from 12 to 18 taels per pecul, according to their flavour.

5th SORT. *Bohea Pecho* and *Ankay Pecho*. This tea is called by the Chinese *Pach-ho*. *Bohea Pecho* sells at 40 to 120 taels per pecul, *Ankay Pecho* at 32 to 42. *Pecho* is composed of the young leaves, gathered when they first push forth, whilst the white down is upon them, and just before they begin to expand, and is erroneously supposed by Europeans to be the flower of the tea tree. The flowers of the tea tree are either quite white, or tinged with a rose colour, and resemble in size and appearance the hedge rose. *Pecho* is rarely seen perfectly white, being generally mixed with older leaves, which are brown. Of the very first sort (having long white leaves, without the smallest mixture of black or brown) I have been assured there are not more than 2 or 3 peculs brought annually to Canton, and somewhat less carried to Kiachta, to sell to the Russian traders on the confines of Siberia and China. There is, however, more of



the second quality (which is not so white, nor the leaves so long,) carried to Kiachta; and this sells in Moscow and St. Petersburg at from 18 to 25 roubles the pound.

Black Teas are both naturally, as well as from the mode of preparing them, much more wholesome to drink than the finer green teas, which some persons in Europe prefer. The finer green teas are moistened with a starch made of rice, rolled in the fingers, and dried on copper sheets or plates. Black Teas, and the low-priced green Teas, are dried on bamboo baskets, though some are also prepared by hand.

Those Chinese whom I consulted on the subject told me that in China Green Teas are not much used, as they are thought to attack the nerves.\*

#### GREEN TEAS.

1st SORT. *Hyson* and *Singlo Hyson* (the highest priced).

All the Green Teas which come under the denomination of *Singlo*, or have *Singlo* prefixed to their names, are inferior to those of the *Hyson* stock. *Hyson Chulan* sells from one tael

\* Sometimes they colour their Green Teas with smalts, or Prussian blue,—substances which are any thing but wholesome in the form of drink.



to as high as two taels and a half, (one pound and a third English,) the catty, according to goodness; but it is more commonly sold by the box, at the rate of sixteen to eighteen dollars for the single box of 10 catties, and thirty-one to thirty-four dollars for the double box. In this price is included that of the box, which is always of black nankin lacker, inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The very best *Hyson Chulan*, treble-flowered, is worth forty dollars the box, of twenty catties. *Singlo Chulan* is cheaper; but is sometimes so well scented, that strangers, without the aid of a Chinese broker, would not be able to discover the difference.

Another quality of Hyson, called *Hyson-Gomee*, sells almost as dear as the *Chulan*, when of the first sort; and although not flowered, is very high-flavoured. *Chulan* is always cheaper or dearer, according to the number of times it has been flowered.

2nd SORT—of high-priced *Hyson* and *Singlo Hyson*. The *Hyson* of this class sells for 50 to 60 taels the pecul. *Singlo Hyson* sells at 44 to 50, according to the demand.

3rd SORT. *Hyson Gunpowder* and *Singlo Gunpowder*, by some called *Imperial Hyson*



*Gunpowder*, of the best quality, is in small, round lumps, like shot, and sells at 80 to 120 taels per pecul. *Singlo Gunpowder* sells at 70 to 80, and some inferior sorts of this stock sell as low as 50 to 65.

4th sort. *Hyson-young Hyson*, and *Singlo-young Hyson*. *Hyson-young Hyson* is the siftings of the fine *Hyson* and *Gunpowder*, as appears in their broken pieces; and, if good, is of a darkish shining colour. It sells at from 34 to 42 taels the pecul, and sometimes higher.

*Singlo-young Hyson* is never so dark-coloured, nor so well twisted, and sells at 25 to 32 taels per pecul.

5th sort. *Hyson Skin*, and *Singlo Skin*. *Hyson Skin* is the commonest green tea of that stock, much drunk in England and America, and sells at 26 to 30 taels the pecul for the best.

*Singlo Skin* is not so well twisted, nor so dark-coloured, having a light bluish cast: it sells at from 22 to 25 taels the pecul.

The common cargo Green Tea, sold to the English company, is called *Singlo*, the best of which is quite as good as what is called *Singlo skin*, generally purchased by the British factory at 22 to 25 taels per pecul. A particular quality



of this is called *Twankay* by the English, and is what the factory purchases in large quantities.

There is no lower quality of green Tea, except a very bad imitation, sold at Canton, and prepared there, of Canton Tea and *Singlo Skin*. Composed of the worst materials, this Tea only finds purchasers among the new comers, who choose to buy without taking the advice of more experienced persons. Nothing is more difficult than to chuse Teas, and, of course, long experience in the business is absolutely necessary.

The Chinese, or at least all those who can afford it, drink their tea out of a large cup with a cover, without milk and sugar. A small portion of the leaves (which some are so particular as to have weighed,) is put into the cup, boiling water poured upon them, and the cup covered. After a minute or two, they take off the cover to regale themselves with the odour, as well as to prevent its becoming too strong. They then (as I have before observed) drink it whilst it is yet so hot that they can only sip a few drops at a time. Afterwards, hot water is poured again on the same leaves, even to the third or fourth time, until all the flavour is exhausted. This method prevents the tea's having



the strong bitter taste that it acquires if drawn in a metal tea-pot.

By this account I have shewn that all the Teas brought to Europe belong to four stocks, namely *Bohea*, *Twankay*, *Hyson*, and *Singlo*; and that the different qualities depend upon the season of gathering the leaves; as well as upon the various methods of preparing them. These differences produce a variety of qualities from the same tree, as the process of flowering them, &c. plainly indicates. The last preparation all Teas indiscriminately undergo, before they are packed, is *firing*. It is performed by putting them into cylinders of sheet-iron, which are toasted or baked before the fire, until the Tea acquires the crispness necessary to preserve it, and to make it likewise give out its odour. The best Tea, if it gets damp, loses immediately its fine smell; but, if fired again, or even dried in an oven, it will recover. As soon as it is fired, it is packed in boxes. Some commoner sorts are brought in large baskets to Canton, where they are fired again, and packed in boxes for exportation.

All the low-priced black Teas are packed in Canton, and pressed into the boxes by the bare feet of dirty labourers, covered with perspira-



tion and dust. It is well that those who drink them have not seen them packed up, or they would be disgusted. The finer Teas are put by hand into the boxes, and great care is taken to have them well-fired, and to chuse dry weather for packing them. Should there be a damp atmosphere, it is postponed, or else performed in warm rooms, kept close shut, to prevent the bad effects of the external air, seeing that the least moisture destroys the crispness and fine smell.

When well packed, however, and enclosed in a leaden case, afterwards surrounded with dry leaves of the sugar-cane, and a wooden box well-prepared and *chunamed*, it is no common moisture that will penetrate. The proof is that the teas are carried by sea, perfectly fresh and good, to all parts of the world. It is the tea-sellers in Europe that spoil them, by keeping the chests open to all sorts of weather, when they expose them for sale.

A Chinese tea-smeller first crushes the tea in his hand, to try if it is well-fired; afterwards, he blows his breath upon it, and applies it close to his nose to have the smell. To ascertain the real flavour and colour, he draws it in a covered cup of milk-white china, and, after tasting and smelling it whilst hot, he lets it remain a whole



night, and the next day he again looks at it to see the colour. The quantity put into one of these cups is always nicely weighed; care also is taken to have the best water, and that it be poured on the leaves boiling hot, as also that the water be boiled in an earthen vessel. It will be seen, then, that the choosing of Teas is as nice an art as the tasting of wines, and certainly requires that a man should have the five senses with which nature has endowed him all in good order, ere he can be a master of his business.

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In taking leave of my readers, I must beg leave to assure them, that I have done my best towards giving them a nearer acquaintance with Chinese manners and customs. If I have in any respect erroneously represented the Government, my eyes and ears must have deceived me; for with the best aid of these I never could discover that pre-eminence, which the Jesuits and others have asserted for it. On the contrary, I must repeat, that the Chinese government exhibits a deplorable contrast with every thing that is great, noble, honorable, wise and good! Proud, vain, and insulting in its commerce with strangers, but weak and vicious in its internal administration, it represses the



energies and debases the condition, as far as it can, of a population equal perhaps to that of all Europe. Furthermore, although destitute of any effective military force, it contrives by artifice and insolence to lay the nations of the earth under contribution !

Lucky art thou, O land of Tea-leaves, that canst thus hold in thy sway the hearts of oak, and calm the fire of the British Lion by the charmed potion, bohea—that most *dear* of delicious draughts ! Of such materials is the magic which alone preserves the haughty but pusillanimous *Quas* from being crushed by the powerful paws of that noble animal whose ire no other earthly sedative but *tea* could possibly appease ! I shall not be surprised, however, to find the Lion of Albion shortly aroused from the stupor into which he has been thrown by the mysterious fumes of the Bohea—and the *grand monopoly* effectually dissipated along with those fumes. Yet, whatever may be the *desire* to have a free commerce with China, my own judgment and experience incline me to give an opinion somewhat at variance with that wish. Though exclusive monopoly may be prejudicial, to throw open the trade might prove still worse in its consequences. I have seen that individuals have



always transacted their business in China much less advantageously than the British Company. The Chinese, from long habit, are attached to companies, and have a confidence in them that no individual traders could inspire. The members of the Hong, or Chinese Company, have often experienced the good effects of the interference and protection of the British Company with the higher Mandarins of Canton; and consequently feel the respect that is due, and the advantage of having such a powerful friend. When the reader reflects, also, on the facts I have related of the Government, he will probably conclude with me, that those exactions, vexations, difficulties, disputes, and inconveniences, which already clog the commerce of a powerful company (in whom the Chinese merchants place infinitely more confidence than in their own Mandarins,) would be but augmented under a free trade. If confidence were destroyed (as it certainly would be under a free trade), the private traders would be left entirely at the mercy of the venality of the local authorities—for I am well persuaded the Chinese Company will never take upon themselves to be responsible for the conduct of every individual



who may choose to make ventures to China. If the freedom of commerce existed *in* China, I should then agree in opinion with those who wish for a free trade; but as, on the contrary, the native trade is embarrassed in every possible way, less advantage will be derived under an open system of traffic, than under the monopoly of the Company.

I regret that I should oppose what seems to be the prevailing opinion of the day; but, giving my own conscientiously, I must express my thorough persuasion, that the best possible method of trading with the Chinese is by companies (with whatever modifications) until the Chinese Government shall be prevailed with to receive Europeans on a more liberal footing, and shall change, *in toto*, its policy in respect to foreign nations. National prejudices, where they are so deeply rooted as in China, cannot be at once opposed with success—nay, they must be respected, by those who find it their interest to preserve commerce and friendship.

Tea, which has now become the popular beverage of almost every country of the globe, is no where else to be had than in China. We must, then, either sacrifice our taste for this



luxury, together with the revenues arising out of its consumption, or silently submit, for the present, to the terms its insolent possessors think proper to impose upon us. To conclude in the words of the old Latin proverb—“*Deliberandum est diu quod statuendum semel.*”

THE END.



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